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A MEMORIAL

OF

PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

JOHN A. LOWELL & CO. BOSTON, U. S. A.

P. H. Sheridan

A MEMORIAL

OF

PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN

FROM THE

CITY OF BOSTON

City council

BOSTON
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL
1889

E467

K.K. Feb. 15-11

CITY OF BOSTON.

In Board of Aldermen, Dec. 31, 1888.

Ordered, That the Clerk of Committees be hereby authorized, under the direction of the Committee on Printing, to prepare for publication and to print two thousand copies of the proceedings of the City Council upon the death of General Philip H. Sheridan, together with an account of the memorial services at Tremont Temple on the 18th instant, including the eulogy pronounced by General Francis A. Walker, ten copies to be allowed each member of the City Council of 1888; the expense thus incurred to be charged to the appropriation for Incidentals.

Passed. Sent down for concurrence. Jan. 3, came up concurred.

Approved by the Mayor, January 5, 1889.

A true copy.

Attest:

JOHN T. PRIEST,

Assistant City Clerk.

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DEATH OF GENERAL SHERIDAN.

DEATH OF GENERAL SHERIDAN.

The death of General Philip Henry Sheridan occurred at Nonquit, near New Bedford, Massachusetts, on the 5th of August, 1888, at twenty minutes past ten o'clock P.M.

The immediate cause of his death was heart failure, brought on by a complication of disorders from which he had been suffering for some time. In the early spring he had experienced an attack that threatened a fatal termination, and for a number of weeks his life was despaired of; the whole nation meantime being held in a suspense of anxious longing for the welfare of the illustrious general whose life was precious in their sight. On the approach of warm weather, however, he rallied sufficiently to permit of his removal from Washington to the more refreshing climate and air of the little village of Nonquit, on the southerly shore of our own Massachusetts. Here he improved apparently, for a time, but it was not a lasting improvement, as the hand of Death was upon him; and the hero of many a well-fought battle-field finally succumbed to the last enemy of man, his death occurring as above stated.

ACTION OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT.

ACTION OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT.

The news of his death was soon received in this city, and the sad intelligence was conveyed to the citizens by tolling the fire-alarm bells.

His Honor Mayor O'Brien immediately issued a call for special meetings of the two branches of the City Government for the purpose of taking official recognition of the sad event.

In Board of Aldermen, Monday, Aug. 6, 1888.

Special meeting of the Board of Aldermen at one o'clock P.M., under call of His Honor the Mayor, to take appropriate action relative to the death of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, Alderman Allen, chairman, presiding. Absent: Aldermen Doherty, N. G. Smith, Wilson.

The call was read and placed on file.

The following was received: —

City of Boston,

Executive Department, Aug. 6, 1888.

To the Honorable the City Council: —

Gentlemen, — I regret to announce the death of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, and it is proper that the City Council of Boston should be among the first to pass appropriate resolutions in honor of his memory.

General Sheridan has been one of our most prominent citizens for twenty-five years. A brave and courageous soldier, one of our most successful generals in the late war, we are largely

indebted to him for the peace, union, and prosperity that the country now enjoys.

At the time of his death he was the commander of our army, honored and respected by all our people, and we regret that in the prime of manhood, when his experience and ability were of great benefit to his country, he should be called from among us.

Yours respectfully,

HUGH O'BRIEN, *Mayor.*

Sent down.

Alderman ROGERS said: —

I am satisfied that we will all recognize the propriety of the action of His Honor the Mayor in calling us together upon this occasion. We also recognize the impropriety of any attempt at a eulogy on the character of a man like General Sheridan, especially at this time; but we are delighted to place ourselves upon record as among those who appreciate the qualities which made him General Sheridan. There are two or three characteristics of the man which, it seems to me, are so prominent as to be all that I will attempt to mention, and one of those is the characteristic, which is rare, of his ability to command men. There are certain characteristics which a man may have, which we call eloquence — that is, the power to move men by oratory. It does not consist in well-rounded sentences; it does not consist in the grammatical expression; but there is a subtle something, which we call eloquence, by which men are moved, and moved so that the man by his power, independent of his other characteristics

or qualifications, is recognized as an orator. There was something in General Sheridan which gave him the power to command men. It is a subtle something which we cannot describe, but it was real. We recognize the power of a man to influence us and lead us the moment we come into his presence. It seems to me that characteristic was manifested in every act that made up the career of General Sheridan; not only at Winchester, where we have him in verse as a hero, who, by his presence, gathered together the scattered army and wrought victory out of defeat, but at every point where he touched the army of the United States, and in every campaign almost, he was a conspicuous figure; we find in him this same power to influence men by his presence; and his courage was, of course, beyond all question, for more than any other man in our late army was he found at the front to cheer the men by his personal presence. Not only this, but he was an expert in the art of war. We sometimes say that circumstances make a man; but circumstances never made a man like Sheridan out of ordinary material. Providence comes to our relief sometimes; but you always find in the men who have become great and who have achieved great things, qualities of greatness which only need the opportunity to develop themselves. These qualifications and these abilities General Sheridan possessed in a remarkable degree. Then he was an executive, and could accomplish what he attempted, and expected to accomplish it before he attempted it; and the men who can both

plan and execute are rare. General Sheridan was one of those men. In order to voice the sentiment of this Board in regard to the great national loss that the country has sustained, in obedience to the call of his Honor the Mayor I wish to offer these resolutions.

Alderman Rogers offered the following: —

Resolved, That the members of the City Council of Boston have learned of the death of Gen. Philip Sheridan with feelings of profound sorrow and regret.

Resolved, That by the death of General Sheridan the people of this country are called upon to mourn the loss of another gallant soldier, a high-minded patriot and citizen, whose name must be added to the roll of distinguished heroes whose fame and services a grateful country will ever faithfully cherish.

"That which made these men and men like these can never die."

Resolved, That we recognize in General Sheridan all those admirable qualities which go to make up the true soldier and military hero. He entered the service of his country fully equipped in the science of war, and throughout his career he displayed such courage and sagacity, and such brilliant generalship in conducting his campaigns, as to win for himself a conspicuous position among our most distinguished military commanders.

Resolved, That the members of the City Council of

Boston extend their warmest sympathy to the family of the late General Sheridan in this hour of sorrow and affliction.

Ordered, That, as a mark of respect, His Honor the Mayor be requested to cause the flags to be displayed at half-mast upon the public buildings and grounds until the day of the funeral, and the fire-alarm bells to be tolled during the hour set apart for the funeral of General Sheridan.

The CHAIRMAN : —

Gentlemen, the resolutions and orders are before you for your action.

Alderman MCLAUGHLIN said : —

I desire to second the resolutions that have been presented as a tribute to the memory of our late General Sheridan. When the news through the press this morning was conveyed to the country that he had died, nothing was heard on either hand but words of sympathy and condolence for his family and the country. His life, Mr. Chairman, like those of others, has been to me a striking and forcible illustration of the great benefit and advantage it is to be a citizen of a great, free country, because in him we find the boy of humble origin transferred, not by any inheritance, not by any social position, and not by any political influence, into one of the greatest generals that the age has seen. Not only has he been

esteemed by our whole country, but he has been admired by the whole world, and looked up to by the great generals on the other side as one of the greatest in his special line. But a short time ago, Mr. Chairman, some of us had the pleasure of seeing the general in Boston. I cannot, in my way, add anything to his fame as a general of the United States army, but this I must say, that those who were associated with him in the trials of this country adored him, because they knew that wherever they went he was willing also to risk his life. Those of us who, at that time, could not and did not appreciate, on account of our years, the position, have learned since, from history, who he was and what was the esteem that he was held in by the soldiers of the army. It is certainly a proper thing for the loyal city of Boston at this time to bow its head in reverence to the memory of a man whose name will shine in the history of our country as one of its bravest generals and truest citizens.

Alderman C. W. Smith said: —

I desire to second the resolutions which have been offered by the gentleman from Ward 25. The great generals, as well as the private soldiers, of the late civil war are fast passing away. Already more than a majority of those who took up arms in the defence of their country, at the call of our beloved President, Abraham Lincoln, have passed away. How cordial would be the reception tendered to those heroes of

high and low rank were they allowed to return to us again! But would the reception be less cordial, extended by those who fell upon the field of battle and those who died soon after the close of the war, either from disease contracted in the service or wounds received, to their commander, General Sheridan, who has so lately joined them? How pleasant must be the meeting of those veterans after many years of separation! It is our pleasure, as well as our duty, to honor the dead, — the patriotic dead, our country's dead; but let us not forget those who still remain with us. To them we can extend aid and assistance whenever relief is needed, while with the dead we can simply place upon their graves the flowers on Memorial day, and keep ever present in our memories the services that they rendered the country. General Sheridan — a general among generals, a leader among leaders, a citizen among citizens, leaving in war no blot on his name, leaving in peace no stain on his record — will stand high on the roll of honor of those who served, and served well, their country in its hour of need. I believe the resolutions which have been offered express the feelings and sentiments of every member of this Board, and I would suggest that when the vote be taken on their adoption that it be taken by a rising vote.

The resolves and order were adopted by a unanimous rising vote.

Sent down.

Alderman Gove said: —

In rising to present this order which I propose to present immediately, I would say that my reason for presenting it is this: that it seems to me the most honored members of the City Council should, as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed dead, represent us in paying our respects. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that when so noble, so brave, and so good a man as General Sheridan has passed away, it is the duty of the city government of Boston to send representatives to represent them in paying the last tribute that can be paid, and I present the following order, and ask for its adoption: —

Alderman Gove offered an order: —

That the Chairman of the Board of Aldermen and the President of the Common Council be a committee authorized to attend the funeral of the late Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, the expense attending the same to be charged to the joint contingent fund of the City Council.

The order was read a second time and passed under a suspension of the rules.

Sent down.

Adjourned at 1.28 P.M., on motion of Alderman Gove.

In Common Council, Monday, Aug. 6, 1888.

Special meeting of the Common Council at 7.30 P.M., under call of His Honor the Mayor, to take appropriate action on the death of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, President Barry in the chair.

The call for the meeting was placed on file.

President Barry, in calling the meeting to order, said: —

Gentlemen of the Common Council, — It is with no ordinary emotion that I call you to order to-night. His Honor the Mayor has summoned us together in special session, in order that we may have an opportunity of expressing, in behalf of the City of Boston, the sincere and heartfelt sorrow which we all feel at the death of General Sheridan. I know that no words of mine are needed to ensure the passage of appropriate resolutions, which will testify to the courage, the bravery, and the patriotism of the departed hero. The praise of his many admirable qualities is to-day on every tongue, and we all feel that by his death we have lost a personal friend, so endeared was he to all our hearts. I wish it was within my power to express to you a fair estimate of the noble character of General Sheridan; but this will be done under the auspices of the city government, at an early day, by one fully competent. The death of the gallant commander falls with severity on us all, but especially on those of our number who are of the same blood and the same faith as he was. He was an honor to the suffering country which was the home of his ancestors, and a credit to the religion which beautified his life and sanctified his death. I will not detain you longer by further remarks of my own, but will ask the clerk to read the message of His Honor the Mayor.

The following papers came down from the Board of Aldermen : —

Message of His Honor the Mayor to the City Council, relative to the death of General Sheridan.

Placed on file.

Resolutions of respect to the memory of General Sheridan, and order that, as a mark of respect, His Honor the Mayor be requested to cause the flags to be displayed at half-mast upon the public buildings and grounds until the day of the funeral, and the fire-alarm bells to be tolled during the hour set apart for the funeral.

Mr. Sullivan, of Ward 22, said : —

I rise to move that the Council concur in the passage of the resolutions and in the adoption of the order as sent down by the Board of Aldermen. Perhaps it would be unnecessary for me, as a member of the Common Council, to add anything to what is expressed in the excellent resolutions that have been offered in the Board of Aldermen, and I would not do so but for this fact, that I feel, after once having had the privilege and honor of meeting General Sheridan, that it would be, perhaps, in me a fault, if not a wrong, not to say something about the gallant hero of the Shenandoah Valley. I am struck with the fact that, however great a man is in his life, still, like all men, his death has to come, and that at the door of the rich and the poor, the humble and the great, death's knock will be heard, and life will have passed away. In General Sheridan there are characteristics, to my mind, that

perhaps cannot be found in any other of the grand heroes of the late war of the rebellion, and I may go further and say that, taking all the great generals we may read about in history, there were characteristics in General Sheridan, noble and sublime, that could not have been found in them. It would perhaps be unnecessary to any one having read the history of the great war which has passed away, and also having studied into the characters and abilities of the great generals who brought victory to many a battle-field for the Union, for me to dwell at all on things of that kind, for in every hamlet, town, and village the children of the United States learn about the history of the rebellion, and the heroes who fought in the great rebellion; and yet, when we regard the life of General Sheridan, a small boy in an obscure village in the State of Ohio, who, by the flash of his genius and the brilliancy of his sword, went from the captaincy of a single company and became what has only been granted to two in the history of this country,—lieutenant-general of the army,—we must stand somewhat in astonishment, and must also reflect on this fact and this truth,—that every boy, whether born in the hovels of the city or in the farmhouse of the country, has this right, under the Constitution of America, to rise to the highest position that this country can bestow upon him. This was seen in the career of General Sheridan; and in all the great battle-fields on which he fought, the great energy, genius, perseverance, and activity of the man was shown from Booneville to

Chickamauga, from Chickamauga to Chattanooga, from Chattanooga to Cedar Creek, from Cedar Creek to Cold Harbor, until he became the sublime hero of the Shenandoah Valley; so much so, that when the name of Sheridan was heard in the valley, from the day when he rode from twenty miles away and saved the Union army from defeat, the people knew that they were safe when Sheridan was near, and the opposing armies of the South knew that it was no place for them to be when Sheridan was at the head of his great cavalry. Sheridan was, indeed, a sublime soldier. He proved by his career that a man may have his ancestors from a foreign country, may be of English, Irish, or Italian origin, or what not, and still prove a good American citizen. Sheridan is an example to-day that all men may look up to as a proof that a man may be of a certain religion, and yet become and be a true American citizen. For that reason, there are many in this country, north, south, east, and west, who look up to Sheridan, besides being a glorious patriot and soldier, as also representing the fact that a man may be a true citizen of this republic, whatever his opinions may be either in politics or religion. That is what General Sheridan has proved; and when we reflect that after the soldier had passed through his battles and sieges, after he attained the greatest rank in the army that this country could place upon him, after becoming the lieutenant-general of the army, and then its general, we cannot but more than ever admire the man when we see the quiet

tranquillity and nobleness of his life in the home with his wife and little children. That time, perhaps, too soon passed away. The general did not long retain the great office that his country bestowed upon him. He soon passed from this life, I trust to obtain greater glories than earth could place upon him. Another thing strikes the student of the great men of the times, and it is this, in my opinion, that at the death-bed it would seem that he was surrounded by the more holy scenes of the great battle of life. It was not the Sisters of Mercy bending over the soldier dying on the battle-field, and yet perhaps to his mind the battles that had passed away came back as he saw the sweet faces of the nuns, not about his tent, not on a bed of straw, but about his home. What a holy scene it was to see the man, the hero, the great soldier of his time, of whom it was said by the great German soldier, Von Moltke, that perhaps he had surpassed, not only in his own time, but in all times, all others as a cavalry leader, — the man whom the great General Grant, whom many of his countrymen laud to the skies as the peer of Cæsar and Hannibal, said was perhaps the greatest soldier of his time, — what a holy scene it was to see him surrounded by these sweet influences! It would be perhaps wholly out of place to compare this general with other generals of his own time or those who have passed by ; but to return once more to his death-bed, I felt as I read the story of his dying hours, and how the sweet nuns Urban and Justinia

knelt by his bedside in prayer, that he was obtaining greater glory than had ever been bestowed upon him, greater than earth could offer to him, and that he was going to that land which I trust he is now in, loaded with those honors which virtue always will attain, and which, no doubt, he has attained. Therefore, Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Council, without further remarks on this matter, I would say for myself, and I think each one of you will re-echo in your hearts what I say, peace be to the soul of General Philip H. Sheridan!

Mr. Maccabe, of Ward 1, said: —

It is with the deepest feelings of regret, Mr. President and gentlemen, that I rise to second the resolutions just commented upon by my eloquent friend. I fully appreciate the services of General Sheridan, yet I cannot give utterance to sufficient words in praise of his patriotic efforts as a loyal American. His deeds speak for themselves, as is amply attested to by a sorrowing nation, who, to-night, enjoy prosperity and plenty by the grace of God and the struggles of this same heroic Sheridan and his comrades in blue, leaving to us a country with no North, no South, no East, no West, but one country and one flag. Incidentally, I might remark that the life of General Sheridan affords a magnificent lesson to the American youth, in that it serves to illustrate that no barrier can exist in this country of ours whereby true worth or ambition is in any wise limited. That, if nothing

more, is amply attested in the magnificent record of General Sheridan, who has passed to his rest. General Sheridan, moreover, had all the features and essential qualities of a great man. It is a pleasure to read his history; as a boy, obedient and dutiful to his mother; as a husband and a father, kind and loving; as a man, true and steadfast, honorable and upright; and as a soldier, his heart was as warm as it was brave. Brave and patriotic, loyal and true, he will be forever the object of a nation's love and gratitude as one of the patriots who bared their breasts to the hissing bullet and screeching shell that the life of this our country might be maintained in all its dignity and simple grandeur. Mr. President, I second the adoption of the resolutions.

The resolutions and order were adopted by a unanimous rising vote.

The following also came from the Board: —

Ordered, That the Chairman of the Board of Aldermen and the President of the Common Council be a committee authorized to attend the funeral, the expense attending the same to be charged to the joint contingent fund of the City Council.

The question came on giving the order a second reading.

The order was read a second time and passed in concurrence, under suspension of the rule.

Adjourned at 8.12 P.M., on motion of Mr. Fraser, of Ward 6.

MEMORIAL SERVICES.

MEMORIAL SERVICES.

The following order was presented on the 13th of September, and adopted by the City Council, providing for the appointment of a Joint Special Committee, to arrange for the delivery of a eulogy upon the life and services of General Sheridan, namely: —

City of Boston,
In Common Council, Sept. 13, 1888.

Ordered, That a Joint Special Committee, consisting of five members of the Common Council, with such as the Board of Aldermen may join, be appointed to arrange for the delivery of a eulogy on the life and services of the late Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, before the city government and citizens of Boston; the expense for the same to be charged to the appropriation for Incidental Expenses.

Passed; yeas, 58; nays, none.

Messrs. Keenan, Boynton, R. Sullivan, Clark, and Fraser were appointed on said committee.

Sent up for concurrence.

DAVID F. BARRY,
President.

In Board of Aldermen, Sept. 17, 1888.

Concurred; yeas, 11; nays, none; and Aldermen Allen, McLaughlin, and Rogers were appointed on said committee.

CHAS. H. ALLEN,
Chairman.

Approved Sept. 19, 1888.

CHAS. H. ALLEN,
Acting Mayor.

A true copy.

Attest:

J. H. O'NEIL,
City Clerk.

In pursuance of the duties imposed upon them, the committee made their arrangements for a memorial service in honor of General Sheridan, and selected the 18th of December as the day upon which the service should take place.

Gen. Francis A. Walker, a well-known military man and intimately connected with General Sheridan during the war, was invited to pronounce the eulogy, and accepted the invitation of the committee.

The trustees of Tremont Temple tendered to the city the free use of their hall for the services, and their offer was accepted.

Official invitations to attend the services were extended to His Excellency the Governor and the members of his staff; the Executive Council; heads of State Departments; United States Officers, civil, military, and naval, located in Boston; the Judges of the Supreme, Superior, and Municipal Courts; past Mayors of Boston; representatives of the Press; members of the City Council; heads of Departments and city officials.

The platform was tastefully decorated with plants and flowers; festoons of laurel leaves and smilax adorned the front, and a beautiful basket of flowers covered the speaker's desk. The exercises commenced at three o'clock with music by the Germania Orchestra.

His Honor Mayor O'Brien then arose and called upon the chaplain of the occasion, Rev. William Elliot Griffis, who invoked the divine blessing as follows: —

PRAYER BY REV. WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D.

Almighty God, unto whom we dedicate our Sabbaths, our sanctuaries, and ourselves, to thee, also, we dedicate this hour of our solemn gathering. We acknowledge thee as the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Ruler of the hosts of heaven, and the Maker of all things, visible and invisible.

We humbly beseech the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit, as we to-day recall the scenes of a generation ago. We praise thee that thou didst form the earth to be inhabited; that thou didst command man, thy creature, to subdue and replenish the earth, to keep it and make it beautiful. We thank thee that thou didst not let this fair continent lie waste, but that, in the fulness of thine appointed time, thou didst send forth the white-winged messengers of exploration and commerce, to spy out this land of our fathers.

We bless thee especially that thou didst bring hither the tried and true men of earth, who, in thy Providence, were prepared by long discipline and hardship for this large and wealthy place. We thank

thee that thou didst watch over them in all their trials, even when, hardly bestead and oppressed, they were driven from home and from country to country, as oil is poured from vessel to vessel. Thus didst thou lead them, until, with passionate love for liberty, for self-government, for pure religion and learning, thou didst bring them to this coast, and here, out of many peoples, make one new man.

We thank thee for the gifts and graces with which thou hast endowed the American citizen, and for the government founded in wisdom which we believe was above man's. That it pleased thee from colonies to make States, and from States a great nation, we give thee thanks. And when the life of the nation was imperilled, we bless thee, that with a zeal, a consecration to sacrifice, an unquailing courage, and a tenacity of conviction equal to those of their Revolutionary fathers, the sons rose to the struggle against rebellion and the conspiracy of slavery. For their heroism in the field and on the deck, for the unselfish devotion of mothers and kindred, for the wisdom of rulers, for the valor of armies, and the might of navies, for the patient suffering and the active benevolence of those trying days, we thank thee, O God, giver of all good things. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O God, give glory for victory.

And now that our land rests in peace, strong at home and respected abroad, may we not forget the living heroes who jeoparded their lives for us, nor the dead who consecrated their all to their country's

cause, counting not their lives dear unto them, that they might win for us freedom and union. And as to-day thy servant recalls for us, even as David of his fellow-soldier, Jonathan, the virtues and merits of one of our great leaders, may we learn to follow him of whom we shall hear, in his courage, his valor, his devotion to duty, and his patriotism. We thank thee that thou didst preserve him amid all dangers of war and battle to assist in bringing to an end the long strife. Teach us by the very limitations of human character to follow men only as they follow him who left us an example that we should follow in his steps. Give unto us not only the courage of the soldier, but the finer courage of faith, of abstinence from all that mars manhood or displeases thee. In the little, as well as in the great affairs of life, make us patient, faithful and true. May we not despise the daily common round of service, nor slight our duty to truth, because life seems tame and issues small in these quiet times, compared to those stirring years when the drums beat and the cannon thundered, and the pulse throbbed. Show us the greatness of bloodless victory. Let the rancor of strife be forgotten. As over the battlefields nature spreads her oblivious mantle of flowers, so in our broad land may all bitterness and malice cease, as under thy grace and providence we all attain the unity of brotherhood, and the people of all the States dwell in one love to our common country.

Preserve unto us and unto those who shall come after us, the institutions of law, of order, of free-

dom, of enlightenment, of religion, which thou hast ordained. Hear thou the prayer which on our city's seal has been engraven: "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers." And thou, O Jehovah; in whose sight a thousand years are as one day, who seest that one by one the fathers pass away, and we, one and all, are swiftly moving to the bound of life, prepare us to live on the earth, and make us ready to leave it at thy call. Grant that when we die, it may be in the communion of the Christian church, at peace with God, in charity with all mankind, and with a strong, and holy, and reasonable hope of life from the dead, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

At the close of the prayer a selection of music was performed by the orchestra, after which His Honor the Mayor arose and said: —

Ladies and Gentlemen, — We meet to-day to recall and honor the memory of one of the most brilliant generals our country has ever produced [applause], and I now take pleasure in introducing Gen. Francis A. Walker, who has kindly consented to pronounce his eulogy.

General Walker stepped to the desk, and received a hearty greeting. His address was delivered in an interesting style, his hearers listening attentively throughout, and at the close he was accorded a generous round of applause.

Another selection of music was then performed, after which the benediction was pronounced, and the audience dispersed.

THE EULOGY.

THE EULOGY.

The city of Boston drops its wreath of praise, bedewed with tears, upon the new-made grave of Philip Sheridan.

Thrice, in three years, the American people have stood by the couch of an illustrious hero, and watched with breathless interest the long, losing struggle of a resolute, powerful nature in the grasp of the grim destroyer. Morning, noon, and night, as the telegraph ticked out the fateful figures of pulse, respiration, and temperature, the nation felt as those feel who overlook a battle on which their all is staked, and mark its varying fortunes: ground gained here, and there lost; now, a column mounting a height crowned by artillery; now, that column shattered in the moment of seeming triumph; long lines after a victorious advance first brought to a stand, then swept backwards by overwhelming force; now, the flight and tumult which tell that the enemy has found some weak or undefended part, and is fast pouring his eager battalions into the very heart of the position; and soon rout and wreck are everywhere.

Of the three renowned soldiers whose fate has thus painfully interested the nation, and, indeed, the whole world, through weary months of fluctuating hopes and

fears, one was the foremost chieftain of our civil war, — the patient, silent, indomitable Grant; the second, the great, liberal Emperor of Germany; the last, the daring and impetuous soldier whom we to-day have met to honor.

Philip Henry Sheridan was born in Albany, March 6, 1831, of parents who had but a few months before reached the land their son was so gallantly to defend. From his Irish stock the boy derived that high degree of combative spirit and that eager, aggressive disposition which were, in after life, to make him so peculiarly formidable an antagonist. He was to play his part in a drama of continental magnitude and inconceivable consequence, among men in most of whom prudence predominated; in whom caution chilled the sap of life, so that it ran slowly; men on whom responsibility for the lives of thousands rested like an oppressive weight; with many of whom high military scholarship and studious habits induced excessive refinement in preparation, and long and painful hesitation in action. He was to take part in a war in which the wide geographical extent of the operations, the nature of the country in which movements were to be made and battles fought, and the peculiar character of the adversary to be encountered, should give an exceptionally high value to aggressiveness of disposition and a confident and resolute spirit. Temper will tell in every war that is waged; but the proportion in which skill and science, on the one hand, and combativeness, on the other, contribute to success, vary widely with the conditions under which the con-

test is carried on. It was in the great American civil war that the value of a sanguine temperament, an aggressive disposition, and even mere creature pugnacity, on the part of a commander of troops, rose to its utmost height.

Active, eager, impetuous, fiery, by nature: it was these qualities, not less than the powers of his mind or his professional acquirements, which enabled Sheridan, after long and severe training in subordinate station, to rain upon the exhausted body of the Confederacy, in the last year of the war, that fast and furious shower of blows which brought to an end the greatest rebellion of modern times.

Although Albany had then but one-third of its present population, it already seemed overcrowded to John Sheridan, who, with his three children, the youngest, Philip, but a year old, moved, in 1832, to Somerset, Perry county, Ohio. Here for many years he found employment for his energies as a contractor upon parts of that great system of public improvements which soon made Ohio the third State in the Union. Having compassed the small stock of learning which, in those primitive conditions, lay within his reach, the boy, at fourteen years of age, entered that school in which many of America's great men have acquired not the least valuable part of their knowledge and training, — the country store. Here for three years he remained, his quick intelligence, buoyant disposition, and strict fidelity securing him the confidence of his employers, and winning for him such small promotions as the nature of the business allowed.

How it came about that the youthful Sheridan went to the Military Academy and adopted the profession of arms, then so inconspicuous in American life, he has told us in those vigorous and racy memoirs which four months ago he bequeathed, as almost his sole legacy, to his wife and children. It was the echoes of the battles of the Mexican war amid those far northern woods which first awoke the deep passion of his nature, and made him, in thought, and purpose, and feeling, a soldier. Taking advantage of an accidental vacancy in the representation of his Congressional district at West Point, — an opportunity not in those days very highly thought of throughout our own section of the country, though always prized by the generous youth of the South, — he, to his great delight, secured the nomination, and presented himself for examination at the Academy.

Sheridan's career at West Point was not marked by scholarly ability. Unlike Grant, who has recorded that he was even anxious to see the Academy abolished, as was proposed, in order that he might thus get his own discharge, Sheridan enjoyed his cadet life and duties, and looked eagerly forward to entrance into the service ; but the deficiencies of his early training combined with his mental habits to place him in that section of the class whose members are often less honored at the time by their instructors than they afterwards, by their conduct, prove themselves to deserve. Sheridan was eminently a man of action ; scholarship was not greatly in his line. Moreover, an outbreak of insubordination, due

to his fiery and impetuous temper, led to both loss of rank and to suspension for a year. Insulted, as he deemed himself, by a cadet superior, he proceeded to such measures of personal chastisement as led to his graduating a year after the class with which he entered. We may not doubt that the bitterness of the disappointment and the disgrace, during those eight long months of banishment, spent in the cabin of his grieving mother, bore fruit of good discipline, and did a useful work in chastening and sobering the too impetuous spirit.

Sheridan was the only one among the West Pointers, on either side, in the civil war, attaining the highest rank and achieving a permanent reputation, who graduated after the war with Mexico. This was unquestionably a great loss to him, and cannot rightly be left out of account in any estimate that may be made of his career. History shows conclusively enough that any officer who has, in one war, exercised high command and won a reputation which he may well fear to lose, is less than likely to add to his fame in a new contest, succeeding after a long interval of peace, perhaps under conditions greatly changed by the lapse of time. But while this is abundantly established by experience, it is also true that it is an inestimable advantage to a young soldier, fresh from the schools, to have an opportunity to see the practical application of military precepts, to personally observe examples of high soldierly conduct, and to exercise power and bear responsibility under the scrutinizing, but sympathetic,

eyes of great commanders, to whom he looks up with youthful reverence and enthusiasm. Such an opportunity was denied to Sheridan ; and that, alone among the graduates of the Academy after 1847, he fought his way to the first rank among the soldiers of the army, justly affords a substantial addition to his fame.

From no source can the student of military history derive clearer instruction than in carefully reading the records of the early service, in subordinate capacities, of soldiers who have afterwards become renowned ; but neither time nor this occasion permits us to dwell on the life of Lieutenant Sheridan between 1853 and 1861, first in Texas and afterwards in Oregon and Washington Territory. I cannot, however, forbear to quote his own account of his experience in dealing, when a lieutenant of infantry, with a detachment of dragoons, in command of which he was placed during the Spokane war, in 1856: —

" When I relieved Hood, — a dragoon officer of their own regiment, — they did not like the change, and I understood that they somewhat contemptuously expressed this in more ways than one, in order to try the temper of the new 'leftenant;' but appreciative and unremitting care, together with firm and just discipline, soon quieted all symptoms of dissatisfaction and overcame all prejudice. The detachment had been made up of details from the different companies of the regiment, and as it was usual, under such circumstances, for every company commander to shove into

the detail he was called upon to furnish the most troublesome and insubordinate individuals of his company, I had some difficulty, when first taking command, in controlling such a medley of recalcitrants; but by forethought for them and their wants, and a strict watchfulness for their rights and comfort, I was able in a short time to make them obedient and the detachment cohesive. In the past year they had made long and tiresome marches, forded swift mountain streams, constructed rafts of logs or bundles of dry reeds to ferry our baggage, swum deep rivers, marched on foot to save their worn-out and exhausted animals, climbed mountains, fought Indians, and in all and everything had done the best they could for the service and their commander. The disaffected feeling they entertained when I first assumed command soon wore away, and in its place came a confidence and respect which it gives me the greatest pleasure to remember, for, small though it was, this was my first cavalry command."

What Sheridan here describes was thoroughly characteristic of his career. What he did, as a young second lieutenant, with this strange detachment, he did with his brigade of cavalry in Mississippi, with his division of infantry in the Army of the Cumberland, with the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac. Civilians are apt to think of a successful commander as a sort of Homeric hero, swaggering around the field of battle, and at the critical moment seizing some convenient missile, — "a rock which two strong men could scarcely lift," — and with it crushing his

antagonist to the earth. But the battles of modern warfare are not won by rude strength propelling casual weapons; nor was Sheridan, with all his impetuosity and vehemence, a soldier who relied upon gigantic exertions in actual conflict to bring him victory. With infinite pains he forged the brand his arm was to wield. He knew that unless its temper were perfect, the greater the force of the blow the more likely was the sword to break in his hand; and, so, in camp he was always preparing for battle. He studied his command, marked and distinguished the best officers, assiduously corrected the faults of raw levies, and won the confidence of his men, not by weak indulgence, not by mere good nature, but by care of their health, by provision for their wants, by stern repression of disorder, by anticipation of impending evils. It is only men who have been thus dealt with before the battle who will, in the battle, possess that mutual trust and that reliance upon their leader which win victory, if victory is possible, or sustain the spirit and maintain discipline in inevitable defeat.

The outbreak of the war of secession found Sheridan still on the Pacific coast, a lieutenant of infantry; but the numerous defections from the army and the raising of new "regular" regiments soon brought his promotion to a captaincy. From his distant station he had watched the rising storm of rebellion with intense anxiety; and the first conflicts at the East wrought in him an inexpressible desire to take part in the struggle, due not more to his native

combativeness and professional ambition than to his passionate love of country.

Perhaps in nothing does popular opinion regarding the war commit a greater injustice than in attributing a superior patriotism to the volunteer. The reasons for that notion are not far to seek. The public thought was rightfully impressed by the splendid gallantry and devotion with which the generous youth of 1861, through their own free act and choice, cut themselves off from home and friends and rallied around the flag of the Union. On the other hand, the officers of the regular army were not less naturally looked upon as accepting their posts of danger and sacrifice almost as a matter of business, the course of their education and their professional interests practically leaving them no choice but to fight on the one side or on the other.

I believe, however, that public spirit was exceptionally strong among the officers of the regular army. They, alone, of all the citizens of the United States, had been educated and bred under circumstances which made their country a constant object of regard, and which magnified and exalted every consideration relating to its honor and dignity. Those of us who remember the days before the war recall how common then was the complaint that patriotism was dead; that the long reign of peace had fostered, at the best, civic virtues only, and that professional ambition and the greed of gain had dwarfed nobler and less selfish sentiments. There was, in those days, no instruction given regarding public affairs in our common schools;

and even in most of our colleges there was no teaching of American history. The ordinary citizen of Massachusetts, of Pennsylvania, of Michigan, encountered the Government of the United States literally at the door of the post-office only. Even the Fourth of July had degenerated into a mere barbaric festival of noise and boyish folly.

But the young cadet at West Point was deeply instructed, as a student, in his duties to his native land. Every morning he saw the flag of the United States run up the staff, amid the discharge of artillery, and at nightfall he heard it saluted as it fell. Under that flag he performed his mimic evolutions day by day, and all his life was lived in the name of his country. His instructors were officers of the United States, many of them men who had shed their blood in its cause. How idle, then, to assume that the graduate of West Point was less imbued and instinct with patriotic sentiment than the graduate of Harvard or Yale!

And when the boy put on the dress of manhood, it was the uniform of his country which he assumed. Duty to the country became the very subject-matter of his professional career, the source, at once, and the aim, the beginning and the end, of his official life. Still every morning the flag was saluted as it rose. Scarcely during the day did he pass out of the sight of that gay and glorious emblem of the nation's unity.

Deep and pervasive as we may rightfully assume the feeling of patriotism to have been among the

officers of the regular army in 1861, however perverted by false political theories in the case of those who came from the South, we shall readily believe that in few did that feeling rise to a stronger passion than in the breast of the active, ardent, impetuous Sheridan. Far away from the seat of war, at an isolated post, where news came slowly and often came distorted by rumor and panic, the young lieutenant awaited the order which should summon him to the conflict. "We received our mail at Yamhill only once a week," he writes, "and then had to bring it from Portland, Oregon, by express. On the day of the week that our courier, or messenger, was expected back from Portland, I would go out early in the morning to a commanding point above the post, from which I could see a long distance down the road, as it ran through the valley of the Yamhill, and there I would watch with anxiety for his coming, longing for good news."

At last, in September, came the welcome intelligence that he had been promoted to a captaincy, and the still more welcome order to join his company at the East. He brought to the scene of fierce and protracted conflict a frame naturally strong and thoroughly "trained" by campaigning experiences along the Rio Grande and in the North-west. "So well hardened by my mountain service was I," he once said, in a speech to his former comrades, "it now seems to me, when I look back on what I went through, that I must have been almost insensible to fatigue." While history contains some exam-

ples of generals of feeble body conducting successful campaigns by pure power of mind and will, no one who knows what labors, vexations, and cares the daily course of military operations brings upon their responsible head will fail to recognize in this abounding vitality, this briskly burning fire of physical life, an instrument well worthy of the vivacious, alert, intrepid, indomitable spirit of the young soldier.

On his arrival in St. Louis, Captain Sheridan was assigned to staff duty, and became the chief quartermaster and chief commmissary of subsistence to the army of General Curtis, then entering upon the campaign which culminated in the battle of Pea Ridge. His tireless energy soon achieved a marked success in the supply of the army; but his angry impatience with thieving contractors, and their weak or corrupt creatures in the service, ultimately caused his displacement; and the great cavalry commander of the future was sent away from the field of operations to buy horses in Northern markets!

The news of the battle of Shiloh irresistibly drew Sheridan back to St. Louis, to beg employment in the field somewhere, somehow, against the enemy; and much to his joy, and inexpressibly to the benefit of the service, the opening was soon found. After a brief tour of staff duty at headquarters, he was appointed, by the Governor of Michigan, Colonel of the Second Cavalry regiment from that State. In this most fortunate appointment lay, closely involved, the whole of one of the most remarkable careers in the history of war. In few respects do men of great

natural ability differ so widely as in the faculty of securing for themselves a place to work and to exert the power that is in them. There are men whom no circumstances can keep down; no misconception or official neglect will long avail to deny them opportunity. Conscious of their powers, they assert themselves vigorously against ignorance and stupidity; they push for place; and, first winning this, they proceed by heroic actions to show themselves worthy of it and of promotion from it. There are, also, men, equally capable of great achievements, who are absolutely dependent, in the first instance, upon recognition by others for their *που στῶ*, — their place to stand and to exert the force that is in them. Not, perhaps, from excess of modesty, but because they lack the special faculty needed for advancing themselves, they may long, and possibly, so far as themselves are concerned, indefinitely, be left in places where no adequate opportunity offers for the exertion of their powers. But, from the moment they once get their feet down upon the ground, and a leverage on which to work, they become distinguished. Such a man was Grant; but this seems less strange because of his silent and reserved temper. Such a man, too, was Sheridan, in spite of his hearty, expressive, expansive, spontaneous disposition. See him, in the second year of the war, without a command, engaged in petty and miscellaneous duties, while hundreds of men, without military experience or any considerable qualifications for service, had long been in positions which seemed to this splendid young officer, well

trained and well approved in action, almost too high for him ever to hope to attain!

The credit of selecting Sheridan for the command of Second Michigan Cavalry is variously attributed. He himself, in his memoirs, seems inclined to think that the suggestion was due to Gen. Gordon Granger. General Sherman had already proposed him to the Governor of Ohio for the colonelcy of a regiment from that State, but without result. It is certain that, for the actual appointment, much was due to the warm and strenuous advocacy of Capt. Russell A. Alger, an officer of that regiment, and afterwards Governor of Michigan.

However it came about, the promotion brought as much surprise as delight to the young captain. And his manner of assuming his new command was significant and expressive of his whole subsequent career. That night, May 27, 1862, he joined his regiment at eight o'clock; and during the same night the trumpet sounded to horse for a raid upon the enemy's communications. "Dressed in a coat and trousers of a captain of infantry," he wrote, "but recast as a colonel of cavalry by a pair of well-worn eagles that General Granger had kindly given me, I hurriedly placed on my saddle a haversack containing some coffee, sugar, bacon, and hard bread, and, mounting my horse, reported my regiment to the brigade commander as ready for duty."

I have said that Sheridan's manner of joining his regiment was significant of his whole subsequent career. The coat of a captain of infantry, with a

pair of eagles hastily sewn upon the shoulders, may fairly represent the headlong rapidity of his advance in rank and in command. In only two weeks from the day he joined his regiment, on the eve of the raid to Booneville, Sheridan found himself, by the promotion of his superior, in command of his brigade. "Although but a few days," he writes, "had elapsed from the date of my appointment as Colonel of the Second Michigan, to that of my succeeding to the command of the brigade, I believe I can say with propriety that I had firmly established myself in the confidence of the officers and men of the regiment, and won their regard by thoughtful care. I had striven unceasingly to have them well fed and well clothed, had personally looked after the selection of their camps, and maintained such a discipline as to allay former irritation."

I have taken this extract from Sheridan's autobiography, so much in the vein of that previously given, because it is essential to a right understanding of his career that we should disabuse our minds of the notion, so prevalent, that his brilliant successes were due chiefly to impetuosity and daring. The wild rush, indeed, came in its time; force was transmuted into fury; savage blows were struck in quick succession. But the preparation for the day of conflict had been careful, patient, skilful.

Sheridan had not long to wait to show his quality to the men who had sent him off to buy horses, on the eve of Shiloh. On the first of July, while in command of two regiments, at the perilously advanced

post of Booneville, he was attacked by a cavalry column, consisting of six regiments and two battalions, under General Chalmers. Against such odds mere straightforward fighting, however gallant, could not long avail. The only way of escape was firmly and sharply to grasp the nettle, danger, and pluck from it the flower, safety. Despatching a small battalion, under Captain Alger, around the enemy's flank, Sheridan fell with all his remaining force upon their front. Disconcerted by the fury of the direct attack and the sudden appearance of Alger in their rear, the Confederates gave way in all directions and fled from the field. The capacity for initiative here displayed, the ability boldly to take desperate risks, and to assume the offensive in face of seemingly hopeless odds, were thoroughly characteristic of Sheridan, and appear throughout his career in striking contrast to the conduct of the ordinary brigade or division commander, who would hold a position with stubborn courage till fairly swept away by force of numbers, or, if so ordered, would advance, against a torrent of fire, till half his men had fallen, but was destitute of enterprise and utterly incapable of original and spontaneous action.

During the days following the action at Booneville, Sheridan's small brigade was successively reënforced by one regiment and another of cavalry; but in the rapid backward movements and the extensive reorganization of troops which resulted from Bragg's invasion of Kentucky, Sheridan found himself, by the middle of September, at Louisville, with the so-called

Pea Ridge brigade of infantry, a battery of artillery, and only the regiment of cavalry of which he was the lawful colonel. A few days later eight new regiments and an additional battery were assigned to him; and the young officer who had started out with such brilliant promise as a cavalry leader became, he scarcely knew how or when, the commander of a division of infantry in that splendid body of troops which came to be known as the Army of the Cumberland.

We have already seen enough of Philip Sheridan in his early career to know what sort of a division commander he became;[1] while the names of Perryville [Oct. 8, 1862], Stone's river [Dec. 31, 1862, to Jan. 3, 1863], and Chickamauga [Sept. 19 and 20, 1863] would give ample assurance, were one never to read the details of those desperate conflicts, that all which his care and pains, his unresting exertions, unfailing vigilance, and unflinching discipline could effect, in compacting, shaping, and tempering the excellent material placed under him, was proved, and tested, and tried to the utmost. The first of those sanguinary combats gave "Sheridan's division" a name throughout the army; and each bloody battle that ensued heightened its reputation. His troops followed him into action with a confidence created by such care and pains as have

[1] Very striking testimony to Sheridan's remarkable skill in organizing and disciplining raw troops is found in the fact that, of about fifty new regiments sent into Kentucky to aid in repelling Bragg's invasion, almost the only ones which, after the battle of Perryville, were incorporated into the column which returned to Tennessee were the eight forming the bulk of Sheridan's division.

been described, and with an enthusiasm engendered on the spot by his own matchless example of fiery valor.

It was at Stone's river that the development of the battle brought into the strongest relief the soldierly character of Sheridan. Rosecrans, setting out from the vicinity of Nashville, on the 26th of December, 1862, had moved against the army of Bragg, intrenched along Stone's river, in front of Murfreesborough. After incessant skirmishing and occasional severe fighting the enemy's line was, on the 30th, fully disclosed, and the several corps of the Union army took post with reference to an attack to be delivered by Crittenden's corps, at daybreak, against the Confederate right. But before Crittenden moved in the morning, General Bragg, taking the initiative with the audacity so characteristic of Confederate commanders, from first to last of the war, threw a powerful column from Hardee's corps upon the division of Johnson, which formed the Union right. Overwhelming Johnson with vast odds, the Confederates, flushed with success, fell upon the division of Davis, attacking it at once in front and in flank, and drove it, bravely but uselessly fighting, out of its place in the Union line.

Next on the left lay the division of Sheridan; and upon its behavior, under these trying circumstances, was to depend the fate of the battle; was to be decided whether the Confederates, gathering volume and fury as they tore up the Union line, should reach the Nashville pike and throw the army of Rosecrans back in rout and disgrace. As the

victorious troops of Hardee advanced from the west, threatening Sheridan's rear, the fresh division of Cheatham was thrown upon his front. It is in such a time of trial that a commander reaps the fruits of discipline, and is rewarded for his long and patient moulding of his troops through all the tedious duties of the camp. Nor was Sheridan unprepared for the shock. During the night he had gone to his corps commander with reports of active movements in the enemy's lines towards our right, and, though he could gain no credence for these reports, he had his own command in hand when the blow fell. Unshaken and undaunted, his regiments, led by brigadiers worthy of their troops and of their chief, met the shock with a resolution that rose as the conflict deepened, and, more than once, hurling the enemy back from his fiercest assault, charged him in turn across the bloody spaces of the battle-field. In such a charge fell the gallant and accomplished Sill, whose name will ever remain among the brightest of all who laid down their lives for liberty and country in the war for the Union.

When, at last, the rapid advance of the turning column made longer occupation of his original line impossible, Sheridan drew his depleted brigades back to a point where he could still cover the flank of the enemy, and give time for the new dispositions which, in anguish of heart, Rosecrans was making to meet the pressing and terrible exigency that had arisen. In this position, which was one most desirable to be occupied, Sheridan remained to the last

moment; but no reënforcements arriving from the left, and the exultant Confederates swarming rapidly around his right and into his rear, he moved to the front, from his left flank, under a severe fire, and attached himself to the right of Negley's division, where, on rough ground, covered in part by growths of cedar, the undaunted soldier formed his men on two lines, — one fronting south, the other west, his artillery at the angle. Here, forming the extreme right of the Union army, and the only guard of its rear, he sustained for hours the furious assaults of Cheatham and Hardee. Here fell two more of his gallant brigade commanders and hundreds of his men, yet his line never for a moment wavered on either of its faces.

At last, the arrangements for drawing the army into a new position having been completed, Sheridan let go his hold upon the rocky and wooded ridges to which he had clung with a steadfast courage that extorted the admiration of the foe; and, with no other loss than that of some guns which could not be drawn through the dense growth and tangled undergrowth of cedars, moved to his fourth and last position for the day.

The present occasion does not allow me to speak of the fighting of the later afternoon, in which Sheridan lost still another brigade commander, — killed, — or of the operations of the 1st and 3d of January, which led to Bragg's surrendering Murfreesborough, notwithstanding the brilliant success which had attended his initiative on the morning of December 31.

In the battle of Chickamauga, September 19 and 20, 1863, Sheridan's division was called to perform a part which was even more trying than that which devolved upon it at Stone's river. In consequence of a radical fault in General Rosecrans' dispositions, the troops comprising his right were incessantly required to close in towards the left, always in the presence of the enemy, often under fire. Anything more dangerous, more trying to the morale of troops, it would be difficult to conceive. In these desperate tactics, Sheridan, whose division had, at the beginning of the action, on the 19th, formed the extreme right, took, by necessity, the most active share, now having to move with the whole, now with a part of his command; this time to fill a gaping void in the line, that time to support some overborne division. At last, while passing with two of his brigades along the rear of Davis' division, under instructions to join Thomas on the extreme left, that division gave way before the savage assaults of Longstreet, and Sheridan found himself involved in furious battle with an enemy greatly superior in numbers, flushed with victory, and swarming in upon both his flanks. After the most stubborn resistance, in which one-third of the command fell, Sheridan was driven back to the Lafayette road. Here he learned that he was cut off. McCook, Crittenden, and even Rosecrans himself, had gone back to Chattanooga. Picking up a portion of Davis' division, under Carlin, and stragglers from other commands, he made an effort to reach Thomas through the Dry Creek Valley; but, finding that the enemy had already

occupied this road, he determined to move further to the rear, and to reach Thomas through Rossville. This he accomplished, reporting about five o'clock to the lion-hearted commander of the left wing, who had all day been fighting against fearful odds, and who now, his back against the mountain-wall, stood alone to hold the direct road to Chattanooga.

The last battle in which Sheridan, who had been made a Major-General for Stone's river, was engaged as a division commander, was on the glorious day when Grant, having broken the long blockade to which the Union army had been obliged to submit after Chickamauga, and having been reënforced by the troops of Sherman and of Hooker, moved out from Chattanooga to that great encounter which was to raise him to the command of all the armies of the United States. Bragg had inconsiderately weakened his army by the detachment of Longstreet's corps and Buckner's division, sent against Burnside in Knoxville. The strait into which Burnside was thus brought, not less than the opportunity offered by Bragg's diminished force, made it necessary for the Union commander to act at once and decisively.

In the afternoon of the 23d of November, the division of T. J. Wood, supported by that of Sheridan, advanced from the works of Chattanooga into the valley which lay between them and Missionary Ridge, drove in the enemy's pickets, and established themselves on Orchard Knob and the ridge to the right. Here, in extemporized rifle-pits, the troops sheltered themselves as well as they could under the

artillery fire of the evening and of the succeeding day.

On the 24th, Sherman, forming Grant's left, made an attack upon the northern end of Missionary Ridge, which, though it did not succeed in its immediate object, won for him an advanced position, and had the effect to draw to his front large bodies of Confederates, thus opening the way to Hooker, who, from the extreme right, advanced against the enemy's works on Lookout Mountain, which he gallantly carried in that famous action known as the Battle above the Clouds.

Grant was now in possession of the entire valley, and his line had become continuous from Hooker to Sherman, while the enemy occupied Missionary Ridge alone. The Union commander therefore resolved to make the battle general and decisive on the morrow.

It was once my good fortune, among a group of officers who had gathered to greet General Grant upon his arrival in the camps along the Rapidan, to hear the great commander tell the story of the 25th of November. The clear, strong statement, quiet intensity, and repressed enthusiasm of the narrator made upon my mind an impression which twenty-four years have scarcely obscured, yet which I cannot hope to reproduce to this audience.

Substantially the whole Union line, for ten miles, was in view from Orchard Knob, the point occupied by the commander-in-chief, from Lookout Mountain, where Hooker lay after his victorious battle of the 24th, down through the Chattanooga valley and across

the low plain from which Thomas' four divisions looked up the steep ascent of Missionary Ridge, far away to the left, where Sherman, crossing the northern end of the range and resting his flank on the Chickamauga river, stood prepared to open the action by an attempt to drive in Bragg's right flank and seize the Chattanooga and Cleveland Railroad. Simultaneously with Sherman's advance, Hooker was to move down the mountain and across the Chattanooga valley, menacing the Confederate position at the southern end of Missionary Ridge with his left wing, while throwing his right forward into the Confederate left-rear at Rossville. Hooker's longer march would necessarily bring him into action some time after the battle had begun upon the left. Meanwhile Thomas, in the centre, was to await the success of Sherman's attack, or the wavering of the Confederate lines from the approach of Hooker.

Promptly at daylight Sherman moved forward from the advanced ground he had reached the day before, and attempted to carry the position in his front, but was met and resisted by a supreme effort of Confederate valor. Division after division was thrown into the fight, and the line of fire stretched eastward and stretched westward as Sherman brought up his reserves, while Bragg drew largely from his intrenchments along the whole extent of Missionary Ridge. At last it was even thought necessary to withdraw Baird's division from Thomas' command and send it to Sherman's support.

A great battle had been raging on the left, yet

nothing had been heard from Hooker, who, with his large force, had long before been expected upon the enemy's flank, but had been detained by the destruction of the bridges over the Chattanooga, and the consequent difficulty of crossing this stream, swollen high by violent rains. The day was fast passing; Sherman had gained no ground which he could hold; an hour more might even see the concentration against our left turn the battle into a Confederate victory; and, at last, Grant determined to order the advance of Thomas, which it had been his plan to reserve until the completion of Hooker's movement. The gallant divisions of Sheridan and Wood, gallantly led, charged across the plain against a heavy fire, and with loud cheers carried the enemy's works along the base of the ridge. Here they had been instructed to halt, re-form, and await further orders. But the position was not tenable, under the fire from the crest. There was no choice but to go back or to go forward; and so, without orders, in a tumult of enthusiasm, these splendid troops, followed close[1] by Baird upon the left, and Johnson upon the right, amid a storm of lead and iron hail, swept up the hill, brigade vying with brigade, color-bearer with color-bearer, company with company, which should be first at the top. Bragg's line along the crest, though weakened by successive detachments, fought bravely for their works and their guns; but the

[1] In thus assigning a slight priority of movement on the part of the divisions of Sheridan and Wood, I follow General Grant's Memoirs. I feel fully justified in doing so, notwithstanding the contradictions of certain writers.

Union troops would not be denied. At a score of points they poured over the Confederate intrenchments, and the position was won.

Partly owing to the fact that the direct attack by Thomas, in anticipation of success by Sherman or the appearance of Hooker, had not been in the original plan of the battle, partly owing to the near approach of night, the victory thus gained was not improved as it should have been. Sheridan, indeed, alone and unsupported, drove the enemy rapidly before him through the valley, and attacked them vigorously upon another ridge, where they had made a stand, carrying the position and capturing guns and prisoners; but he soon found himself without supports, far in advance of the rest of the army, in the face of large masses, which, though beaten, were still resolute, and, under these circumstances, had no choice but to halt his panting troops.

In thus following up the enemy retreating from Missionary Ridge, while other divisions rested content with what they had gained, Sheridan showed high soldierly quality. "To his prompt movement," says General Grant, "the Army of the Cumberland and the nation are indebted for the bulk of the capture of prisoners, artillery, and small-arms that day."

The victory of the 25th of November was decisive of the fortunes, not of Grant only, but also of Sheridan.

When the hero of Donelson, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga, having been created lieutenant-general, and constituted commander-in-chief of all the armies in the field, decided himself to make the campaign of 1864 with the Army of the Potomac, he looked around among

all the officers he had known, personally or by repute, for some man who could wield the splendid Eastern cavalry with the hand of a master and the soul of a hero. For the infantry he had Hancock and Sedgwick and Warren, —men who had measured themselves in many a desperate battle against the foremost chieftains of the South, and had been found wanting in none; men who could do with infantry all that infantry was capable of. At the head of his superb artillery he found Hunt, — an artillerist of matchless skill. But for the cavalry the man was wanting; and, indeed, up to that time the Northern army, east or west, had not produced one cavalry leader of the first class, while the South had Stuart and Forrest.

At the beginning of the war the mounted service of the United States had been subject to grave disadvantages, almost justifying the reluctance of the government to admit extensive recruiting for this arm. The great majority of those who became cavalrymen knew little about horses, and had none of the instincts which stand related to horsemanship. The southern cavalry, on the other hand, was composed of men who had been in the saddle from childhood. Completely masters of their horses, they knew well how to serve them: to care, to tend, to groom, to water, to feed, to picket, to shelter. Moreover, the Southern cavalryman was an adept in woodcraft; able to "orient" himself quickly and surely in the most tangled forest; shrewd at conjecturing the course of a stream or the trend of a range; skilled in searching out paths in the rockiest mountains and fords in the swiftest rivers. It followed that, during the first year or year and a half, the mounted service of the

Confederate army had an immense, an almost ludicrous superiority. Gradually, however, the resolute purpose and steady application of the Puritan began to tell. Little by little the grim cavalrymen in blue gained upon the dashing and picturesque cavaliers in gray. The horse ceased to be a terror to his rider; the rider, to be a torture to his horse. The question, "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?" lost all the humor it once conveyed. Charges were actually made, and sabres were really crossed, at first much to the astonishment of their antagonists. Then stubborn battles were fought. Here and there, under officers of peculiar merit, like Bayard and Davis, the performance of the Northern horse became absolutely brilliant.

But it was Hooker who gave to this arm of the service the greatest impulse and inspiration. It was under that gallant, but unfortunate, chieftain that the cavalry divisions of the Army of the Potomac became the firm, compact, highly disciplined bodies which, commanded by thorough soldiers, like Gregg and Buford, with such admirable brigadiers as Merritt, Farnsworth, Custer, and Devin, encountered the splendid Southern cavalry on equal terms at Brandy Station, Aldie, and Gettysburg.

Such, roughly sketched, had been the history of the mounted service in the Union army down to the close of 1863. With a distinctly lower aptitude for such a service on the part of the Northern people, it had taken the cavalry two years to reach that perfection of discipline and efficiency which the infantry had attained in one. But the great leader

of the Northern horse was yet to appear: the man who could handle an entire corps of cavalry with the freedom and force of a real master. He came on that day, when, looking around on all the resolute, stubborn, energetic, enterprising officers, whose actions he had observed from Belmont to Chattanooga, the lieutenant-general selected Sheridan for this difficult and responsible charge. On the 5th of April the new commander arrived at the headquarters of the cavalry corps, between the Rappahannock and the Rapidan.

Sheridan's Memoirs show how doubtfully his appointment was received at Washington and at headquarters in the field. It did, indeed, seem absurd to bring an infantry officer from the West, to place him over the gallant and accomplished soldiers who had fought their way up to the head of the cavalry divisions of the Army of the Potomac. But Sheridan gave the sceptical little time to indulge their doubts and distrust. After a few days spent in protecting the flanks of the Potomac Army and guarding its trains, during the crossing of the Rapidan and the march to Spottsylvania, May 5–8, operations in which the corps was necessarily broken up to act by divisions, and even by brigades, as so generally in the past, Sheridan obtained leave to mass his force and seek and find the Southern cavalry. He had bitterly and, it must be confessed, not overcourteously complained to General Meade that his combinations had been broken up by orders given directly to his division commanders, and that his

troops had been needlessly scattered. The result of the interview with Meade is best told in Sheridan's words: "After I left him he went to General Grant's headquarters and repeated the conversation to him, mentioning that I had said that I could whip Stuart. At this General Grant remarked: 'Did he say so? Then let him go out and do it.'"

Joyfully receiving the permission thus accorded, Sheridan, on the morning of the 9th of May, drew together his three divisions, under Gregg, Merritt, and Wilson, and moving around the right of the Confederate army, fighting front and rear with Stuart's force, he, next day, struck the Virginia Central, destroying the road, capturing large quantities of rolling-stock and army supplies, and recapturing many Union prisoners taken in the battles around Spottsylvania. On the 11th, after cutting up the Fredericksburg road at Ashland, destroying trains and stores, the whole command moved forward against Stuart's force, which was concentrated at Yellow Tavern, six miles from Richmond. Sheridan, who had "gone out," under a promise to "whip Stuart," joined issue at once, opening with Merritt's division, and following this up with Wilson's and one of Gregg's brigades. The Confederates fought with that brilliant audacity and stubborn courage which they had shown in many a raid and many a battle. They were led by the delight of the Southern chivalry, the romantic, daring cavalryman who, from the time he led his troops around the rear of McClellan's army on the Peninsula, had never ceased to be an inspiration

to his soldiers and a terror to his foes. The battle was fiercely contested; but at last, in a gallant charge by Custer, Stuart fell fighting, and the Confederate line gave way at all points. Gregg then turned upon the force which, under Gen. James B. Gordon, had all along been hanging upon the Union rear, and drove it away, its commander being among the killed.

The victory at Yellow Tavern was complete. Sheridan, resuming his march that night, partly encircled the fortifications of Richmond, engaging both infantry and cavalry, and, crossing at Meadow Bridge, proceeded, in pursuance of his instructions, to Haxall's Landing, where he obtained supplies and ammunition from General Butler's command, regaining the Army of the Potomac in season to take part in the operations along the North Anna. The influence of this successful raid was felt throughout the remainder of the war. The Union cavalry had acquired a confidence in itself never before known; the spirit of united action and of mutual support was infused throughout the corps, and the title of its new leader to the command was confirmed by a patent which none could dispute.

Time will not serve to tell the story of Hawes' shop on the 28th of May, where our cavalry encountered and again defeated the Confederates, heavily reënforced by the arrival of M. C. Butler's command from the South; of Cold Harbor, which Sheridan seized, on the 31st of May, in anticipation of orders, and held, through the following morning, until the

arrival of the Sixth Corps, against repeated attacks of both infantry and cavalry — alas! only to prepare the way for the great disaster of the 3d of June; of Trevillian Station, on the Virginia Central, where, during an extensive raid, undertaken with a view to coöperate with General Hunter, then moving up the valley, Sheridan, on the 11th, with two divisions of his corps, attacking Fitzhugh Lee and Hampton, both front and rear, drove the Confederate cavalry from his path; of Mallory's Cross Roads, the following day, where Torbert's division again engaged Hampton in a bloody but indecisive action, with no small loss to himself; of St. Mary's Church, where Gregg, while covering the passage of the vast trains of the Potomac army, was vehemently attacked by greatly superior force, and, gallantly resisting, was driven in towards Charles City Court House, yet so slowly as to secure the entire safety of his charge; of Reams' Station, where Wilson, returning from a successful expedition against the Lynchburg and Danville railroads, on which he had been sent during Sheridan's absence upon the Trevillian raid, was caught, June 28th, by Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee, supported by infantry under Mahone, and, from not being properly supported from the left wing of the Potomac army, suffered severe punishment; or, finally, of the expedition to the north side of the James river, undertaken by Sheridan, in conjunction with Hancock's Corps, between the 26th and 30th of July, in which the cavalry again successfully encountered the enemy, both horse and foot.

An incident of the last-named operations, which fell under my personal observation, appears to me so far significant of the military character and methods of the two illustrious commanders who were joined in that expedition, as to justify the time that will be taken to narrate it.

After the reconnoisances of the 27th of July had convinced General Grant that his information regarding the force of the enemy north of the James was incorrect, he abandoned his original plan, which had been to drive the enemy in to Chapin's Bluff, and thus lay open the way for Sheridan to proceed against the two railroads north of Richmond, or even, possibly, against the city itself. Instead of this, Grant resolved that the fact that the enemy, in anticipation of our movement, had despatched Wilcox's and Kershaw's divisions from Petersburg, should be made use of for the benefit of Burnside, whose "mine" had now been brought to completion. Hancock and Sheridan were directed, therefore, to keep up their demonstrations, in order to draw over as many of the enemy as possible. These instructions were obeyed with so much spirit that General Lee, fully believing that the whole strength of the Union army was to be exerted in an effort to take Richmond by a direct advance from Deep Bottom, concentrated no less than five of his eight divisions of infantry, and nearly all his cavalry, on the north bank of the James, while twenty miles away, the Fifth, Ninth, and Eighteenth Corps stood ready to enter Petersburg through the hideous avenue which should, on

the 30th, be laid open by the explosion of Burnside's mine.

Not content with this superiority of force, General Grant, on the 28th, directed Hancock to send Mott's division, comprising nearly half of his infantry, back to Petersburg, to relieve Ord's Eighteenth Corps in the intrenchments. Hancock, who was in general command of the expedition, was thus to be left, all day of the 29th, with about eight thousand foot and the cavalry, to confront two-thirds of Lee's army, the James river at his back. The position was dangerous in the extreme. The cavalry were during the night to be sent across the river, there to dismount, and, returning, assist the infantry in holding their perilously extended lines. Emphatic orders were issued regarding the movement, it being explicitly directed that none of the cavalry should continue crossing after daylight; all the orders were duly issued and receipted for; and then headquarters sank to rest, every one fatigued and worn out by the exertions of the three preceding days and nights. Before daybreak I was wakened by hearing General Hancock calling to me from his tent. Accoutred as I was, I presented myself. "Colonel, I am anxious about the cavalry crossing: go to General Sheridan and say that not a man should go upon the bridge after it is light enough to see." I jumped upon a convenient casual horse and galloped to Sheridan's headquarters, in the edge of a wood, near by. As I approached, the first voice I heard was not that of a sentinel or a staff officer, but that of the great cavalryman himself.

"Who is that?" I gave my message. "I was thinking of the same thing. Forsyth, ride to the bridge, and, if General Kautz has not crossed, tell him he cannot do so. Let him mass his division behind the woods, on this side." Forsyth and I rode off together. Day was just breaking, and with it Kautz was about entering upon the bridge. But for this extra precaution the enemy, who had been all night craning their necks from Chapin's Farm, listening to the low rumbling sounds and wondering which way the movement was taking place, would, fifteen minutes later, have seen the cavalry on the bridge, going back across the river, and would, in all probability, have swooped down upon Hancock's small force and driven it into the James. As it turned out, what the eager Confederates saw, as the light increased, was the dismounted cavalry returning, their carbines over their shoulders, looking, for all the world, like honest infantry, apparently the rear of a column that had been crossing all night. The effect on the Confederate commanders was immense. Not only did they refrain from assuming the aggressive, with their vastly superior force, but all day long they awaited an attack with evident uneasiness, General Miles reporting from the skirmish line that their troops were not allowed to leave the intrenchments for dinner.

My story bears its moral. Sheridan and Hancock were perhaps the two officers of the Union army whom men are most apt to think of as carrying everything by storm, through sheer force of will, brilliancy of conception, and command over men. Yet here we

see them lying awake, after great fatigues, in the short hours of a summer night, running, in their minds, over the whole field of the morrow's duty, weighing all adverse chances and providing against every possible miscarriage or misadventure. How many lost opportunities in the war for the Union, how many defeats and disasters sustained, were due to the fact that officers of high rank, in important commands, deemed that they had done their whole duty when they had given the right orders. Such is not the spirit and method of a successful commander. That was not the way of Sheridan and of Hancock. They took pains to give the right orders, and then stood by to see them executed, and to watch against the thousand hostile contingencies which beset the best concerted schemes.

Sheridan's career as the commander of the Cavalry Corps, which was to close with the expedition last mentioned, had not been one of unbroken victory. He was no god of war, whose presence should chase the enemy from the field, and put armies to flight. He was opposed by a gallant body of cavalry, gallantly and skilfully led; yet his success had been as decided in his new field as at the head of a division in the Army of the Cumberland. He had shown himself a great captain of horse, a real master of men. Whether in the care and discipline of his troops, or in the conduct of long, rapid, and critical marches; whether in his dispositions for battle on a large scale, or in the spirit which he infused into his soldiers under fire, he had approved

himself a corps commander of the highest class, as capable in dealing with cavalry as was Hancock in dealing with infantry.

While Sheridan had thus achieved success in the important position to which he had been promoted in a way so remarkable, it could not with assurance have been said, at the end of July, 1864, that he possessed all the qualities, in due proportion and combination, which are required for the leader of an army in the field. Promise of this, indeed, there had been, — promise abundant; but the history of war contains many instances of successful corps commanders who have failed in taking the next step. While thus, no one could, on the day I named, have known that Sheridan would bear that perilous promotion, there was one man who thoroughly believed it, and that man was the lieutenant-general who, on the 1st of August, despatched Sheridan to Harper's Ferry, to take command of the infantry of Wright, Emory, and Crook, with Torbert's and Averell's cavalry, confronting the army of General Jubal A. Early, then occupying the Valley of Virginia, and raiding at will northward into Pennsylvania. For the purpose of giving Sheridan a sufficient range of operations, General Hunter had patriotically withdrawn from his command; and four geographical departments were consolidated to form the Middle Military Division. Again, as at the transfer of Sheridan to the East, the President and Secretary Stanton were doubtful in their minds, but acquiesced in the decision of the lieutenant-general.

In preparation for the campaign about to open, Sheridan, who, even when but a division commander in the West, had been famous for his management of scouts and spies, organized a secret service, which was probably the best known upon our side during the war, and to which in his Memoirs he generously assigns a large share of his subsequent success. No qualification of a commander is of greater importance than the ability to select the right men for this difficult and perilous office; to attach them strongly to himself; to become completely master of their minds and wills; and to inspire them with such enthusiasm for their dangerous but fascinating duties that they will spare no pains and shrink from no risks. One has only to compare the secret service of Sheridan with that of McClellan, to appreciate the immense advantage which may result from a proper use of this agency in war.

The army of Early was somewhat smaller than that which Sheridan could muster for offensive movements, after the innumerable detachments which the situation required him to make, for covering Washington, Baltimore, the Ohio Railroad, and a score of points; but, while Sheridan could only receive reënforcements by long and circuitous routes, Early's forces were liable to be swollen largely, almost without notice, by detachments from Lee. This was the peril which had always beset the Union commanders in the valley of Virginia: that region which had for years been so full of disaster to our arms as to give it the name, "The Valley of Humiliation."

On the 10th of August Sheridan commenced his

march up the valley, driving Early before him. Constant skirmishing took place between the two armies, until, on the 14th, Sheridan occupied the line of Cedar Creek, near Strasburg. That very day he received intelligence that two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, with twenty guns, had been sent from Lee's army, in the hope of crushing him in his advanced position. A retreat was, therefore, imperative; and though it was a bitter thing to do in the eyes of the whole nation, so soon after his accession to command, he at once commenced a retrograde movement upon Halltown, near Harper's Ferry, destroying, by General Grant's order, stores and crops as he passed down the valley.

A vehement outcry was raised against this course, but the sound judgment of the nation has fully approved it as a proper act of war. From the outbreak of the rebellion, the crops of the valley of Virginia had not been made use of mainly for the subsistence of its inhabitants, but had been a principal source of supply for Lee's army defending Richmond. At times the authorities even saved themselves the trouble of transporting the teeming stores of grain from the valley, and sent whole divisions thither to recruit. Moreover, the topographical features of the region were such as to place our commanders in a position of most unfair disadvantage, neutralizing superiority of military force, and often bringing to grief the best-planned operations. If it was right to wage the war for the Union, it was right to make the valley of Virginia, for the time, a desert.

Sheridan's withdrawal, which was conducted with such skill and such instant readiness to assume the tactical aggressive that, though it was sharply followed up, no advantage was obtained by the enemy, and the spirit of the retreating army was not impaired, was yet of a nature to cause grave apprehensions throughout the North, and a new invasion was deemed not improbable. If General Lee entertained such a purpose, it was disconcerted by Sheridan's restless energy. To him a retreat did not mean running away; nor was a defensive attitude one of inactivity. He thrust his cavalry out in every direction, often supported by infantry, threatening here, attacking there, keeping the enemy continually on the alert, and always intimating a renewal of the aggressive. Such a commander was literally of no use to the Confederate army; and interfered seriously with the plan so long successfully pursued, of making one division count for two, by calling it in whenever required at Richmond, and sending it out whenever a spasm of activity seized the Union generals in the valley.

Sheridan was not a man to be kept passive in his intrenchments by Quaker guns, or allow troops to be despatched from his front without holding his antagonist to strict and instant account. Within a few days he was again moving up the valley, closely following Ewell, on whom Lee was urgently calling for the two divisions of Anderson, so much needed at Richmond and Petersburg. On the 3d of September Crook's Corps casually encountered Kershaw's

division actually on the march to Richmond. The celerity and eagerness with which the Union advance was being prosecuted, caused Early for some days longer to retain Anderson's command. Constant skirmishing continued until the 16th, when intelligence was received from a faithful Union woman in Winchester, that, in response to urgent orders from Richmond, Kershaw's division was again on the march through Chester Gap southward. Allowing him, this time, "three days' grace" to get fairly out of the way, Sheridan, on the 19th of September, the first anniversary of Chickamauga, rapidly advancing his troops, in the early morning, seized the fords of the Opequon, and began pouring the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps down the Berryville pike, hoping to overwhelm Early's two divisions stationed along the stream, before the remaining divisions, those of Rodes and Gordon, could be recalled from Martinsburg, whither they had gone to operate against the Baltimore and Ohio road. Meanwhile, Torbert, with Merritt's and Averell's cavalry, moving by way of Stephenson's Depot, was to strike into the Confederate rear; and Crook's small infantry corps was, at the proper moment, to be thrown, as a turning column, towards the valley pike, south of the town. But Rodes and Gordon had, the night before, taken the route to Winchester, while the difficulty of pushing the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps through the narrow defile west of the Opequon, completely commanded as that was by the Confederate artillery, was found much greater than had been anticipated. Before our troops had

been fully formed for attack, Rodes and Gordon arrived upon the field, and striking into a gap between the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps, checked Sheridan's advance, and even threw a portion of his line into confusion. Russell's division sprang vehemently into action and restored the line, though at the cost not only of many men, but also of its commander, one of the bravest, coolest, and most capable officers of the Union armies in the field.

Time was now necessarily taken to rearrange the line of battle for a decisive charge, while Sheridan, hearing nothing from the cavalry, felt compelled, against great reluctance, to call up Crook's divisions. This reënforcement of the Union line caused it to overlap the Confederate left. As Crook advanced, the swinging movement was continued by Emory and by half of Wright's Corps. Crook's troops moving rapidly, found the Confederate flank, at the moment when Torbert, driving before him the cavalry that had sought to withstand his advance from Stephenson's Depot, appeared upon the field.

The time for final action had come. The commander-in-chief, riding along the lines, ordered a general advance from right to left. Our infantry threw themselves upon the foe with the utmost vigor, while Torbert's cavalry rode over horse, foot, and artillery in a splendid charge which gained the enemy's rear. Early's only hope was now to make, with his broken divisions, a stand at Winchester; but soon the eager troops of Torbert gained his left as the victorious infantry swarmed upon his front, and again the Con-

federates were in full retreat, only the fall of night putting a stop to our pursuit.

The battle of the Opequon, or Winchester, thus gained, was a splendid victory for the Northern arms, doing much to redeem the ill-name which the valley of Virginia had long borne in the annals of the war. Beginning with a severe check, due to the rapid concentration of Early's forces and the unexpected delays in passing the Berryville cañon, it was fought through to a successful issue by strong, prompt, decisive movements on the part of the Union commander. Both arms of the service were employed, in close conjunction, with the highest skill. If, owing to the assumed necessity of calling Crook's column into the line of battle, it did not result in the destruction of Early's army, it inflicted upon it a stunning defeat, and established Sheridan's fame as the leader of an army. Five guns, nine battle-flags, and twenty-five hundred prisoners were the spoils of Winchester. The sense of relief experienced by the administration and the country was testified to by the action of the President in promptly appointing the successful commander a brigadier-general in the regular army.

On the 20th of September Sheridan was in pursuit of the enemy, who had taken up a position at Fisher's Hill. Here their front was covered by Tumbling river, while the narrow valley, opening at this point for only three and a half miles, allowed the Confederates to fully man their intrenchments, without any apparent danger of being outflanked. But

Sheridan had in Crook — experienced in Indian fighting before the war, and since renowned as the conqueror of the Apaches — a lieutenant artful, skilful, and a master of woodcraft, well suited to the emergency. Hiding Crook's Corps away in dense woods by day, while making active demonstrations and brisk attacks with his other infantry, Sheridan advanced it, under cover of darkness, along the side of the mountain range, until, on the morning of the 22d, Crook had gained a position unperceived, opposite the Confederate left. Then, while Ricketts' division occupied the enemy's attention by its manœuvres, the turning column swept down from the hillside into their rear. No time was given them to recover from their discomfiture; Ricketts dashed forward to join Crook's left; all the Union troops pushed on in a general charge, and the Confederates, abandoning even the form of organization, sought refuge in precipitate flight. Sixteen guns and eleven hundred prisoners were the fruits of this victory, which, but for the failure of the cavalry to do the part assigned to them in cutting off the Confederate retreat, would have been overwhelming. Sheridan only halted his wearied soldiers when they had pursued the enemy as far as Woodstock. In a few days the whole valley of Virginia was in possession of the Union army. Grant, at Petersburg, ordered a hundred guns to be fired, in each of the armies of the James and of the Potomac, on the news of the battle of Winchester, and a hundred more upon the reports from Fisher's Hill.

The consternation at Richmond corresponded to the

rejoicing within the Union lines at Petersburg and Bermuda Hundred. For the moment it seemed as if nothing could stay this flood of success. But the armies of the American war, both North and South, possessed a resilience and a power of recuperation from disaster to which human history furnishes no parallel. Early was promptly reënforced by the return of Kershaw, while his own gallant troops, steadying themselves after their disaster, drew together, stern and defiant as ever. Hungry, ragged, and worn, baffled, defeated, and overborne, the men of Ramseur and Rodes, of Gordon and Breckinridge, in these dark days of the Confederacy, proved themselves worthy of the race from which they sprang. Less than a month was to pass before the divisions that had been sent "whirling up the valley" were to plunder the camps of the Sixth, Eighth, and Nineteenth Corps.

Important changes in the cavalry followed the actions of September. General Sheridan had been greatly dissatisfied with the manner in which certain bodies had been handled during those operations. I cannot forbear to quote his despatch of September 23d to one of his division commanders: —

"I do not want you to let the enemy bluff you or your command, and I want you to distinctly understand this note. I do not advise rashness, but I do desire resolution and actual fighting, with necessary casualties, before you retire. There must now be no backing or filling by you without a superior force of the enemy actually engaging you."

Sheridan's victories now brought up an important

question of general strategy, namely, whether he should take advantage of Early's defeat to move through the Blue Ridge into Eastern Virginia, and act in immediate coöperation with the forces threatening Richmond. This was Grant's view, but it was strongly opposed by Sheridan, for reasons in which the commander-in-chief finally concurred. Sheridan's opinion now appears clearly justified. The proposed operations would have required the use of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which would have occupied large bodies of troops for its defence. Moreover, it would have brought Sheridan's army within dangerously easy reach of Lee, enabling the Confederate commander to resort freely to the familiar plan of detaching rapidly moving columns from the lines around Richmond. Unquestionably, as we now see it, the true strategy was to keep Sheridan where he had done such good service, until the Southern army should be too much weakened to make any substantial detachment against him.

Sheridan's view having prevailed, it became necessary for him to move back adown the valley, on account of the difficulty of bringing forward supplies. That movement began on the 6th of October, Sheridan complying with Grant's renewed instructions, by still further devastating the regions through which he passed. The enemy's cavalry following up our retreating troops with a traditional confidence which even recent events had not destroyed, Sheridan determined to give them a lesson, and accordingly turned upon Rosser, the new "Saviour of the Val-

ley," with the divisions of Merritt and Custer. After two hours' sharp fighting, the Confederates were thrown back in complete rout, and the Union cavalry followed them upon the run, hardly drawing rein for twenty-six miles, capturing eleven guns and many prisoners. This action, indifferently known as the battle of Tom's Brook, or the Woodstock Races, effectually broke up the Confederate cavalry, which, up to this time, had never known what it was to be used so, and which, in three years of desperate fighting, often against great odds, had always upheld its honor, whether in victory or in defeat. But the 8th of October saw the turning of that long contest in which prestige, the spirit of aggressiveness, the enthusiasm of battle, and the expectation of victory were with Southern horse. The balance had now settled definitively to the Union side; and these advantages, added to a general superiority in numbers, deprived the Confederate cavalry, in its last estate, — I almost grieve to say it, — of somewhat of that dignity which the infantry of Lee's much-enduring army never lost, no, not when, mud-stained and tattered, hungry and worn, faint in body and few in numbers, the survivors of Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and Spottsylvania hurried by night and by day along the road to Appomattox Court House.

But of the Confederate cavalry, after Tom's Brook, we have to note a certain decline in spirit and temper. General Early never fails in any report to stigmatize their conduct, even declaring that he would be glad to dismount them, but that he fears their

example might demoralize the infantry. I would not place too great stress upon the complaints of an angry and disappointed man; but there can be no question that something like the change intimated had passed over the Southern horse.

In part, this was due to the gradual impoverishment of the Confederacy, affecting all arms, but bearing with greatest weight upon the cavalry, as the most expensive branch of the service. In part, it was due to the fact that it was comparatively late in the war when the Southern horsemen came thoroughly to know and to respect their antagonists. The Confederate infantry learned early in 1862 that they had foemen well worthy of their steel, at its brightest and its sharpest; and the vain-glorious and contemptuous spirit with which too many had set out on their career was exchanged for a truer soldierly spirit after the desperate battles of the Peninsula. But from the general causes previously indicated, and also because the real leader of the Northern horse appeared so late, the Southern cavalry retained their self-confidence and their contempt for their enemy too long for their own good as soldiers. A part, also, of the effect we are considering was due to the activity, the aggressive energy, the almost savage ferocity, which Sheridan had infused into the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac.

On the 10th of October, the Union army crossed to the north side of Cedar Creek; and Sheridan, thinking that Early had been sufficiently punished to make it safe, began to send the Sixth Corps back to

Grant. But Early, always loyal to Lee, made his appearance so promptly that the Sixth Corps was halted on its march. On the 13th, the Confederates, to make sure that troops were not being sent to Grant, sharply attacked such of Crook's troops as were on the south side of Cedar Creek and drove them over. Upon this, the Sixth Corps was brought back and placed upon the line of battle. On the night of the 16th, Sheridan, in consequence of General Halleck's repeated requests for a personal conference, left his forces under the command of Gen. Horatio G. Wright, and set out for a hurried trip to Washington, where he arrived on the morning of the 17th. Anxious about his army, Sheridan stayed at the capital only until noon, and then started to return to his command, by way of Martinsburg, which was reached at dark. From Martinsburg, the next day, accompanied by two engineer officers, who had been detailed to lay out a strong line of defensive works in the valley, he proceeded to Winchester, where the remainder of the day was spent in examining the heights about that town, with reference to their capabilities for defence.

We now approach that day which, in public estimation, will always be the brightest and most glorious in Sheridan's career. To the military student, other battles have as high a degree of interest as Cedar Creek; but nothing in the history of warfare so fascinates the popular mind as victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, through the personal influence of a great commander. Sheridan's power to acquire the

confidence of his men in camp, and to inspire them with martial enthusiasm in battle, had, indeed, been an element of his whole career; but the day which dawned upon the night he lay at Winchester was destined to witness a manifestation of that peculiar force so remarkable as profoundly to influence the imagination of the American people.

The troops under General Wright were adequate either to hold a defensive line, or to encounter Early in an open fight; but the traditions of Stonewall Jackson had inspired every Confederate commander with a passion for flank attacks, and here the occasion offered itself. The Union position was, on the whole, a good one. Its right was, indeed, open; but to assail this the Confederates would have had to pass completely across our front, making their retreat, in case of repulse, a matter of grave doubt. There were, moreover, on this flank, two divisions of cavalry, to give notice of such a movement and to delay a hostile advance. The Union left, however, was but slightly held and carelessly observed, notwithstanding that the enemy in attacking here would have their lines of retreat well behind them. General Wright's reason for treating this end of the line with comparative neglect was found in the character of the country, the Massanutten range at this point coming down to Cedar Creek in abrupt and ragged masses; but it must have been a very serious obstacle, indeed, which a Confederate column, bent on a flank attack upon a Union army, could not either cross or turn. During the night of the 18th,

Gen. John B. Gordon, with three divisions, was sent across the river and around the base of the mountain by a narrow foot-path, while Early's other two divisions were put into position to coöperate, at the critical moment, by an attack upon the Union front and right.

The Confederate movements were made with secrecy and celerity. At break of day, Kershaw carried a small work on Wright's left, and, almost at the same moment, Gordon, having twice crossed the Shenandoah on his stealthy march, broke upon the camps of Crook with an overwhelming force. The surprise was complete, the rout total. The position of the Nineteenth Corps, relative to the Eighth, was such that, when the latter was driven from its camps, the former was forced to retreat rapidly, to save itself from being taken in rear. This enabled the last Confederate division to cross the stream; and Early's line thus became continuous, with the enormous advantage arising from the rout of Crook's command and the hasty retirement of Emory's. This advantage was availed of to the uttermost; and the rapid and furious advance of the enemy soon drove the Union army back, in more or less of disorder, much here, less there, until Getty's gallant division of the Sixth Corps, the heroes of twenty battles, bravely supported by the cavalry under Torbert, at last brought Early to a stand. The Union camps and a large part of the Union artillery were the fruits of this daringly conceived and skilfully executed attack.

Meanwhile, where was Sheridan? Fatigued by the

sharp travelling of the three preceding days, the commander of the Middle Military Division had promised himself a comfortable night's rest and a leisurely breakfast before proceeding to camp; but at six o'clock it was reported from the outposts that artillery firing was to be heard in the direction of Cedar Creek. Wright had given information that Grover's division was to go out that morning on a reconnoisance, and the noise was naturally attributed to this. There was yet enough in it to make Sheridan restless, and orders were sent to "hurry up the cook." Firing continued to be heard from the south, but not in a way to create alarm; and it was not until a little before nine o'clock that the staff rode down the streets of Winchester.

The first intimation of anything unusual came from the sinister looks and insulting gestures of the women, who, having doubtless obtained, by "grape-vine telegraph," intelligence of Early's proposed attack, could not withhold the exhibition of their spite and rage. As the edge of the town was reached, the roar of artillery became continuous and more vehement; and Sheridan could no longer doubt that a considerable action was in progress; while the sounds that came up the pike, each moment

> Nearer, clearer, deadlier than before,

told him that it was not alone his own motion, now quickened to a furious pace, but the rapid retreat of his soldiers, which made the sound of battle grow

so fast upon the ear. Sheridan had beneath him, that morning, the good horse, Rienzi, who had borne him in battle, from Perryville down to this day of fate; and as the coal-black steed flung himself into the race that was a race for more than life, escort and staff drifted astern, like cargo flung from a ship that drives before the gale. Down the pike rushed horse and rider, until Sheridan found himself amid the wreckage of the morning's battle, which had by this time floated miles away from the field of action. Here, in long and straggling procession, were hundreds of men slightly wounded, most of them still carrying their muskets. Hundreds there were, too, of men, unhurt, who had been struck by unreasoning panic in the rout of the early morning, and who quickened their flight at every fresh outburst of artillery, miles to the rear. Hundreds more there were who, becoming separated from their regiments and companies, had lost their interest in the war; and, though as cool as ever they were in their lives, had set out for Winchester, and meant to get there, but were not in such haste that they could not stop, every now and then, to "make coffee" on the way. With this throng of fugitives were led horses and officers' servants, ammunition and baggage-wagons, and all that belongs in the rear of a line of battle.

Tradition, popular fame, and poetry represent Sheridan as pursuing his headlong ride to the very end; but he himself records that, when he met these stragglers and runaways, he stopped his horse and

listened to their reports of what had occurred, — reports which he was too old a soldier not to take for what they were worth; and, for a time thereafter, he proceeded at a slower pace, reflecting what should be done in this grave and terrible case. "As I continued at a walk a few hundred yards farther," he says, "thinking all the time of Longstreet's telegram[1] to Early, 'Be ready when I join you, and we will crush Sheridan,' I was fixing in my mind what I should do. My first thought was to stop the army in the suburbs of Winchester, as it came back, form a new line, and fight there; but, as the situation was more maturely considered, a better conception prevailed. I was sure that the troops had confidence in me, for heretofore we had been successful; and as at other times they had seen me present at the slightest sign of trouble or distress, I felt that I ought to try now to restore their broken ranks."

His plan formed, to fight as far to the front as might be, and, if possible, to recover the lost camps, Sheridan quickened his pace; and, leaving the road, which had now become filled with wagons and wounded men, he struck into the fields, where he could give his brave Rienzi the rein.

"When most of the wagons and wounded were past, I returned to the road, which was thickly lined with unhurt men, who, having got far enough to the rear to be out of danger, had halted, without any

[1] A fictitious despatch intercepted by the Union signal officers and transmitted to Sheridan. Longstreet had, in reality, sent no such despatch, and was not on the march to the valley.

organization, and begun cooking coffee; but when they saw me they abandoned their coffee, threw up their hats, shouldered their muskets, and, as I passed along, turned to follow with enthusiasm and cheers. To acknowledge this exhibition of feeling I took off my hat, and with Forsyth and O'Keefe rode some distance in advance of my escort, while every mounted officer who saw me galloped out on either side of the pike to tell the men at a distance that I had come back. In this way the news was spread to the stragglers off the road, when they, too, turned their faces towards the front and marched towards the enemy. I said nothing except to remark, as I rode among those on the road, 'If I had been with you this morning, this disaster would not have happened. We must face the other way; we will go back and recover our camp.'"

To go back and recover the camp was now the word of the beaten army. The name of Sheridan spread from coffee-maker to coffee-maker, from straggler to straggler. Brave men who had forgotten themselves regained their manhood, as they saw the hero of Winchester galloping to the fore; the doubtful and feeble souls caught the impulse, and with cheers turned towards the battle-field; even the cowardly were ashamed, and floated back upon the tide. As he reached Newtown, Sheridan was unable to get through the crowd, so great was the press, and was compelled to ride around the village; but the cry that Sheridan had come, now raised on every hand, soon melted this mass also, and, without organ-

ization and without leaders, the motley throng of broken men from twenty regiments moved down the pike.

When the Union commander, at about half-past ten, reached the front, he found Getty's division, with the cavalry, opposing a firm front to the enemy, about three miles from the line of the early morning. What remained of the Nineteenth Corps, with the other divisions of the Sixth, and a thin line, composed mainly of officers and color-bearers from the broken Eighth, occupied less advanced positions. There were, in fact, men enough; what was wanted was a leader; and a leader had come. At once Sheridan announced his purpose to go back and retake the camps. Officers and men caught fire at his words. The troops in the rear, ordered forward, came up on the double quick, with cheers.

If the Confederate commander had been wise he would have retired across Cedar Creek on hearing those cheers. His remarkable success, at the opening of the battle, had been due to surprise; and, though his divisions had fought gallantly, it was not primarily their fighting which had beaten the Union troops, but the disadvantage at which the latter were placed. At nine o'clock Early had gained a victory which would have done much to hearten the Confederate armies, from the Shenandoah to the Mississippi. He should either have gone forward, giving Wright's army no time to re-form; or he should have promptly retired, carrying off, not only the honors of the day, but all his prisoners and the twenty-four captured

cannon. But Early was fascinated by the position he occupied, holding the camps of his enemy and threatening a fresh attack; while yet he hesitated to go forward, from fear of being assailed in flank by the now dreaded cavalry of Torbert.

At length, somewhat past mid-day, Gordon advanced upon the Nineteenth Corps, but was repulsed; and the two armies again fell into the attitude of watching each other, while Sheridan exerted himself and employed the staff to the uttermost to bring up the men who had gone to the rear. Between half-past three and four the order to go forward was given to the whole Union line. In vain the Confederates resisted; in vain they took the initiative, with their customary audacity, and attempted to enwrap Sheridan's right. The Union cavalry, under Custer and Lowell, charged impetuously whenever occasion offered; the infantry vied with them in the rapidity of their advance. As they drove the enemy over the ground lost in the morning, the impulse grew, and the troops on the left forgot their orders to allow the right to swing around so as to cut Early off from retreat through Strasburg to Fisher's Hill. The whole line went forward — left, centre, and right — abreast; the camps were retaken; the Union guns found their rightful owners; and the Confederate divisions which had crossed Cedar Creek in the morning, to work such havoc, were driven back in confusion, and pursued till nightfall by the tireless cavalry.

The battle of Cedar Creek raised Sheridan to the proud position of a major-general in the regular army

The commission was accompanied by a letter from Secretary Stanton, stating that it was given in recognition of "the personal gallantry, military skill, and just confidence in the courage and patriotism of your troops, displayed by you on the 19th of October, at Cedar Run, whereby, under the blessing of Providence, your routed army was reorganized, a great national disaster averted, and a brilliant victory achieved over the rebels, for the third time, in pitched battle, within thirty days."

The action of the 19th of October practically closed the war in the valley of Virginia, though much of the infantry on both sides was retained there until winter actually set in; and though the irrepressible Early made a demonstration in November, in which his usual ill-fortune overtook him, his troops retiring after considerable losses.

In the remarkable series of operations which have been thus hurriedly reviewed, Philip Sheridan had shown himself an army commander, in the largest sense of the term. His appointment, viewed at first with distrust at Washington, had been as fully approved, in the result, as had been his selection for the command of the Cavalry Corps in the April preceding. He had reclaimed the valley of Virginia from the grasp of the Confederates, and had converted its name from one of evil to one of good omen for the Union arms. He had encountered there the best troops of the Army of Northern Virginia, under its ablest commanders, and had defeated them severely and repeatedly. He had vigilantly guarded against

the quick and secret despatch of troops to and from Richmond, which had formed a leading feature, an essential, and even the decisive part, of the Confederate strategy, ever since Johnston evaded Patterson, and, joining Beauregard at Manassas Junction, won for the Confederacy the battle of Bull Run. He had destroyed the prestige and shattered the organization of the once peerless Southern cavalry. He had captured from the Confederates not less than one hundred pieces of artillery, besides those retaken at Cedar Creek, forty-nine battle-flags, and thirteen thousand prisoners.

No purpose of eulogy would justify the assumption, even by silence, that Sheridan had won these great successes with no more than equal numbers. Troops like those which Early commanded, defending their own soil, with an inestimable advantage from secret intelligence, and operating in a region like the valley of Virginia, which had been the trap in which Union armies, under Fremont, Banks, Shields, Sigel, Hunter, and Milroy had been caught and baited, almost at the pleasure of their antagonists, for three years, were not to be defeated by equal numbers. The army of Sheridan was superior to that of Early, as the army of Grant was superior to that of Lee; as the army of Sherman was superior to that of Johnston. The glory of Sheridan is that, when he was given a superiority of force, he used it; used it actively, aggressively, unceasingly, relentlessly, until his enemy was destroyed.

During the severe winter which followed, Sheridan occupied a fortified camp at Kernstown, sending to

Grant the Sixth Corps and a portion of the Eighth, despatching the rest of the Eighth Corps to West Virginia, and retaining himself but one division of the Nineteenth. Early remained in the vicinity of Staunton, with Rosser's cavalry and Wheaton's division of infantry, operating at intervals against the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. A cavalry expedition sent out by Sheridan, in December, towards Charlottesville resulted disastrously, through the activity and audacity of the enemy and the extreme severity of the weather.

It was in the last days of February, 1865, that Sheridan set out on that great movement which was destined, though not intended, to bring him again upon the left flank of the armies operating against Richmond and Petersburg. Moving up the valley, with Merritt's and Custer's divisions of cavalry, he encountered a small force under Rosser, which he defeated at Mt. Crawford, and, pushing on to Staunton and Waynesboro', he came at the latter place upon Early, who, with the pitifully small remains of his once powerful army, had determined to make his last stand there. Over the intrenchments which sheltered the Confederates, Custer's cavalry charged with irresistible force, capturing all the hostile infantry and many of their cavalry, with seventeen flags and eleven pieces of artillery. Early and his general officers, with a handful of personal followers, escaped by precipitate flight. Thus ended, literally, the Confederate occupation of the valley of Virginia.

The next day Sheridan moved to Charlottesville,

where more prisoners and guns fell into the hands of the indefatigable Custer. Sheridan then marched along the James, thoroughly destroying the canal, intending to cross the river below Lynchburg, and proceed to Appomattox Court House, destroy the Southside Railroad, Lee's main line of supply, as far as Farmville, and thence march southwards and join Sherman, in accordance with Grant's instructions. But the river was found too much swollen by recent rains to allow a crossing; the bridges had been burned by the Confederates; and Sheridan, availing himself of the discretion vested in him, determined to join Grant at Petersburg, breaking up the James river canal and the Virginia Central on the route. This was thoroughly done, one of the incidents of the march being Custer's pursuit of General Early, who, with one or two hundred men, was trying to make his way back to Lee. Some of his staff and escort were captured; but Early himself escaped across the South Anna, and, after a rapid flight, reached Richmond with a single orderly.

On the 18th of March the Cavalry Corps arrived at White House, where supplies awaited them; and, after being thoroughly refreshed and rested, joined Grant's army before Petersburg. Here it was reënforced by Gregg's division, now under Crook, which had remained with Meade when the other divisions went to the valley, in August.

The beginning of the end had come. Throughout the long and distressing winter of 1864–65 no dream of ultimate triumph visited the Southern people. All

hope of foreign intervention had long been abandoned. The cutting in twain of the Confederacy by the capture of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi; the close environment of the insurgent region by land and sea; the altogether unanticipated resolution and devotion of the Northern States; the horrible carnage wrought in the ever-thinning ranks of the Confederate army by that series of actions which, for frequency and for sanguinary ferocity, remain unequalled in the history of war; the bankruptcy of the Confederate treasury; the progressive impoverishment of the Southern fields: all these causes had combined to extinguish the last thoughts of independence. But the Southern leaders were resolved to hold out, in hope of obtaining terms of surrender which should at least save the institution of slavery; and the Southern army, heroic to the bitter end, was still ready to fight for honor, if not for victory.

On the 29th of March General Lee occupied a line covering Richmond and Petersburg, which Grant's successive extensions towards the left, reaching out after the Southside Railroad, had caused to be perilously extended. To fill his forty miles of intrenchments, Lee had but the scanty remains of the great army that had so long fought for the defence of the Southern capital. The cradle and the grave had been robbed to recruit its ranks. Yet thin as were those lines, they were so strongly fortified and so stoutly held that the Union commander might well hesitate to drive his columns against them. Nor was this needful. Far away to the south-west was a point at

which Lee's army could be assailed even more effectually than through a wide breach, had such existed, in its intrenched lines. This was Five Forks, an important junction of roads, fifteen miles or so from Petersburg. A competent Union force, reaching and holding this point, could raid at will upon the Southside Railroad, the great artery of the Confederate army.

On the day I have named, March 29, Sheridan set out for Dinwiddie Court House, with the full strength of the Cavalry Corps, while two infantry corps, the Fifth and the Second, left the intrenched lines to follow in support. Night saw the Second Corps, under Humphreys, confronting the Confederate works west of Hatcher's Run; the Fifth, under Warren, holding the Quaker road after a sharp fight with Anderson; while, on the extreme left, the cavalry had gained its assigned position in front of Dinwiddie.

The constraint brought upon General Lee by the movement on Five Forks was a painful one; but, trying as the situation was, Lee met it with that remarkable fortitude which characterized his whole career. Pickett's division was marched across the Confederate rear from Bermuda Hundred to Five Forks; Hill's troops were stretched further along the White Oak road; while Bushrod Johnson's division and Wise's brigade were sent to oppose Warren on the Quaker road. Thus did Lee answer Grant's movements of the 29th of March.

The 30th witnessed no events of importance, for a

fearful downpour, lasting all day, flooded the low, swampy, tangled country in which these operations were conducted, and rendered the miry roads impassible for either artillery or trains. So gloomy was the outlook that General Grant directed that the movement be suspended, and even that a portion of the cavalry be sent back to a point where supplies could more readily be obtained; but the entreaties of Rawlings, his chief of staff, reënforced by the arguments of Sheridan, who rode back to remonstrate against what he deemed a fatal mistake, induced Grant to withdraw the order. Meanwhile the Union lines were being straightened, connections established, and reconnoisances pushed out, in spite of rain and mud. On the extreme left, a force of cavalry, moving towards Five Forks, encountered the enemy in position.

The 31st of March brought weather that admitted movement, and Warren advanced to seize the White Oak road. So full-fraught with disaster to the Confederates was this intention, that Lee himself brought over the troops and directed the formation of the column with which he hoped, by a supreme effort, to check and disconcert Warren's enterprise. A savage contest ensued. Struck in flank, the veteran division of Ayres gave way, and threw into confusion the supporting division of Crawford. But the resolute action of Griffin and prompt assistance from Humphreys restored the line, and the Confederates were finally driven into their intrenchments. At half-past two Warren had re-formed his corps,

and, advancing again to the attack, succeeded in carrying the enemy's advanced works along the White Oak road.

While this action was in progress, Sheridan, moving up from Dinwiddie to Five Forks, was attacked by six brigades of cavalry and five of infantry, under Pickett. The battle that ensued was a notable one, though the rapid succession of exciting days which followed has deprived it of its due share of public attention. Much of the ground was unfit for cavalry, especially when drenched with rain. The swamp, which would not admit the passage of a horse,[1] bore up the foot of man; the tangled thicket, through which the trooper sought in vain to force his way, gave easy access to the swift and stealthy woodsmen of the South. Thus it happened that Pickett's mixed force possessed, for the time and the place, a decided superiority over Sheridan's cavalry column. It was, also, superior in numbers, Custer's division being as yet far back, with the trains and the artillery. In such a contest Sheridan's command could not but give ground. For hours Pickett's infantry and cavalry pushed them slowly back, stubbornly resisting, now outflanked by the Southern horse, now cut in two by infantry interposing between their wings, until, an hour before sundown, Sheridan formed his troops

[1] Sometimes a horse or mule would be standing apparently on firm ground, when, all at once, one foot would sink, and as he commenced scrambling to catch himself, all his feet would sink, and he would have to be drawn by hand out of the quicksands. — *Grant's Memoirs*, II., 439.

on the open ground, just outside Dinwiddie Court House, and prepared to make his final stand. Here Custer's gallant brigades, coming rapidly up from the rear, took their place in the Union line.

The action that ensued was sharp and short. The efforts of the Confederates to dislodge Sheridan were vain, and darkness fell upon his ranks unbroken.

The situation at Dinwiddie that night was an interesting one. Pickett, in venturing thus far south from Five Forks, had exposed his flank to a possible attack by Warren from the east; and that officer had, even during the afternoon, despatched Bartlett's brigade towards the sound of the firing. He was now directed to draw back, himself, and send a division to Sheridan's support at the Court House. Later, at night, he was ordered to move, with his remaining divisions, directly across, by the Crump road, which Bartlett had taken, past J. Boisseau's house, for the purpose of attacking the Confederates in flank and rear; while Sheridan, reenforced by Ayres, should assume the offensive and engage Pickett in front. It was Warren's failure to execute the latter order, within the time anticipated by Grant and Sheridan, which laid the foundation of his subsequent deprivation of command. Into the reasons which Warren urged in excuse for his delay, this is not the place to enter. There probably never was an officer in command of a corps in active campaign, in difficult country, who has not more than once failed to execute an order within the time his superior anticipated. There probably never was

a commander of an army who, from impatience and over-anxiety, or from ignorance of the precise conditions obtaining, has not more than once given orders which, in the nature of the case, could not be executed in the time allowed, or perhaps at all. Of all movements that can be ordered, a night-march towards the enemy, not over roads held by friendly troops, or, at least, picketed by cavalry, is the most critical and dangerous in execution, and the one respecting which the presumption of total failure rises to a maximum. It will be remembered by many soldiers in this audience that Hooker threw the whole blame of the disaster at Chancellorsville upon Sedgwick's failure to make the night-march through Fredericksburg into Lee's rear, which he had been ordered to make.

No one who knew Gouverneur K. Warren will doubt his sincere conviction that the nature of the country, the state of the roads, the destruction of the bridges across Gravelly Run, and his own close proximity to the enemy, from whom he momentarily anticipated an attack, constituted obstacles which rendered the literal and timely execution of his orders not so much difficult as impossible. This I feel fully authorized, by a long staff experience, to say: that neither by Meade, in 1863, or even by Grant, in 1864, was set and enforced a standard for the execution of orders, which would have made Warren's failure to accomplish the night-march to J. Boisseau's house a capital offence.

At daylight, Sheridan, hearing nothing from Warren,

moved out; but Pickett, apprehending as clearly as had the Union commanders the danger of his position, had begun to withdraw about midnight; and Sheridan, though pressing vigorously upon his rear, could not bring him to an engagement.

Grievously disappointed at the failure of his plan to destroy Pickett's force in front of Dinwiddie, Sheridan proceeded to make his preparations for assaulting the position at Five Forks. The Confederate works ran along the south side of the White Oak road for about a mile and three-quarters, with a return to the rear at their eastern end. Within these works were gathered the troops which constituted the last hope of the Confederacy. Sheridan's dispositions for the impending assault were masterly: bold, shrewd, and skilful. He purposed to extend his cavalry along the entire Confederate front, and wheel the three divisions of the Fifth Corps, now upon the ground, so as to enclose the "return" of Pickett's line, while swinging a division or more into the rear of the position. The attack was brilliantly successful. In spite of a momentary break in Ayres' division, at the angle, and the wide deflection of Crawford's division, during the turning movement, the Confederate position was carried at all points, the cavalry joining in the assault with immense spirit. Thousands of prisoners, with guns and colors, fell into Sheridan's hands; while those of the enemy who escaped capture retreated hastily towards the Southside Railroad.

It was in the moment of victory that the order was

issued which relieved Warren from the command of the corps he had conducted with distinction from the Rapidan to Hatcher's Run. The deflection of one of his divisions, during the turning movement, was added to the account of his failure to accomplish the night-march across Gravelly Run; and the commander of the expedition, —

"*Impiger*, *iracundus*, *inexorabilis*, *acer*," —

dismissed him from the field.

The splendid martial enthusiasm of Sheridan and his impetuosity in battle, which made him such a terror to his foes, might not unnaturally at times have led him to be over-eager with those who were charged with executing his orders. History records too many instances of gallant and generous soldiers thoroughly misunderstanding each other; and perhaps there were never two natures less fitted for mutual understanding than Warren's and Sheridan's; but, oh, the pity! that the iron which then entered into the soul of the youthful hero who saved Gettysburg for the Union arms, and at Bristoe turned his rear guard upon both the pursuing columns of Lee, should have been left to corrode there, without remedy or relief, sinking ever deeper and deeper, until it brought this gifted and accomplished soldier, broken-hearted, to an early grave.

The victory at Five Forks was the signal for the downfall of Petersburg. The news from Sheridan inspired the troops in the trenches and awakened an

indescribable enthusiasm along the entire line. The soldiers in the ranks were eager to be led against the enemy; the most cautious commanders declared their ability to carry the positions in their front. As soon as it was light enough to see, the Sixth and Ninth Corps leaped their intrenchments and stormed the frowning works which for months had held them at bay. The Confederates resisted bravely to the last; when their lines were carried, they fought from traverse to traverse, and returned again and again to recapture positions of vantage that had been wrested from them. Forts Whitworth and Gregg were defended with romantic gallantry. But all in vain: the day had come for which those faithful soldiers of the Union had waited so long. Now giving a hand to one another along the line, now wheeling to enclose some Confederate command, the corps of Ord, Wright, Parke, and Humphreys fought their way over every obstacle, against all resistance, until, at nightfall, the Confederate works south of the Appomattox, except those immediately enclosing the city of Petersburg, were in the possession of Grant.

The story of the great retreat which was that night begun is a record of superhuman exertions on the part of both armies, wrought almost to frenzy by the magnitude of the interests involved, Lee straining every nerve to escape around Grant's left, while the Union corps, the cavalry in the lead, stretched away in long and rapid marches, to gain the points at which the Confederates might seek to turn south, to join Johnston in North Carolina.

On the 5th of April the first act of the great drama had been played. Two corps of Union infantry stood across the Danville Railroad, at Jetersville, which Sheridan, with his escort only, had reached the previous afternoon. Lee's retreat by this route, therefore, was cut off, and his sole hope was now to reach Lynchburg before his pursuers. The next morning the great race was renewed, the Second Corps taking up the direct pursuit; while Sheridan, with the cavalry, gained Rice's Station, cutting Ewell's Corps off from Longstreet's, and bringing the former to a stand at Sailor's Creek. Here, joined by the Sixth Corps, his old soldiers of the valley, Sheridan attacked Ewell with such promptitude and skill, such bitter resolution and unflagging energy, that, though the enemy, in Sheridan's words, "fought like tigers at bay," their lines were broken, their troops were hurled back upon each other from both flanks, and almost the entire command was destroyed. Ewell, with five of his generals and several thousands of his men, with colors and guns, fell into Sheridan's hands. Meanwhile, the Second Corps, which had followed close on Gordon's Corps all day, in line of battle, almost on the run, finally brought it to a stand, farther down on Sailor's Creek, where it was routed after a short contest, losing guns, colors, and nearly two thousand prisoners.

The disasters of the 6th of April, following on the losses previously sustained in battle and from Grant's fierce pursuit, left Lee no longer with an army which could hope to contend, even for a time, against

the pursuing columns. His troops, footsore and worn by unceasing marches night and day, were now almost wholly without food, since the expected supplies had been captured or driven off by the cavalry Sheridan had trained so long, and which, in these critical operations, were everywhere at once, attacking the enemy in front, and flank, and rear, shelling their columns on the route, seizing their trains, breaking down bridges, or charging side by side with the infantry. Yet, still, there was enough left to be worth saving; enough to become the nucleus of a new army and initiate a new campaign, if only the mountains could be reached; enough to justify the boast that the Army of Northern Virginia still existed, its great commander at its head.

In the morning, Humphreys, with the Second Corps, took up the pursuit on the direct road to Lynchburg; and, crossing the Appomattox at Farmville, fought there, on the 7th of April, the last infantry battle of the war. Meanwhile, Sheridan strained every nerve to cut the enemy off from their objective point. He spurred his jaded cavalry to exertions still more energetic; while his fiery orders to the infantry marching to his support, hurried them ever faster and faster along the road. On the 8th he gained Appomattox Station, on the Lynchburg Railroad, capturing several supply trains, with a whole park of artillery; and, forming line of battle, he drove the Confederate advance back upon the Court House.

Sheridan was now across the path of Lee, but with the cavalry only. He could not hope to hold his

position against the force which that night would find concentrated in his front, unless the infantry should come. But could the infantry be brought up? Only such a spirit as now pervaded the Union army, only such commanders as were now at the fore, would have made this possible. All night, in ghostly columns, the troops of Ord and Griffin pressed forward, in an unresting march; and the morning of the 9th of April found them in battle array behind the gallant cavalry, forbidding the Confederate advance.

The long agony was over; the Army of Northern Virginia, ever the main-stay of the Confederacy, had been vanquished; the war for the Union, waged through four years of desperate fighting, which scarcely died down before it was renewed with greater fury, had been brought to a successful issue; the integrity of the nation had been asserted against the most formidable insurrection which history records.

Among the group of illustrious officers who gathered at Appomattox Court House, to witness the surrender of the Confederate army, on that eventful 9th of April, it is not needful to estimate or seek to apportion nicely the share of each in the great result. The glory of that achievement is, like the authority, dignity, and power of the country which was there restored, forever one and indivisible. No man appropriates to himself or carries away any part of it. High up in the zenith of our national life, its mid-day effulgence gilds the stately deeds of the mighty conqueror, master of a million bayonets, who

there received the surrender of Lee; yet that greatness casts no shadow upon the faithful endeavor of the humblest soldier who that day interposed his body between the Confederate host and Lynchburg.

After a recital of such stirring deeds, it would be impertinent to dwell at length on the tame actions of the long peace in which Sheridan enjoyed his well-won honors. Hardly had Johnston surrendered, when Sheridan was sent, with a powerful column, to the Rio Grande, the scene of his first campaigning experiences, nominally to guard American interests on the frontier, but really to serve notice on the Emperor of the French that the cowardly invasion of Mexico, which had been undertaken in reliance upon the disruption of the United States, must now be abandoned. Hampered sorely by diplomatic exigencies, Sheridan yet managed to convey such encouragement and practical assistance to the patriot party in northern Mexico as to lead to a speedy downfall of Maximilian's power in that section; while Napoleon, taking counsel rather of his fears than of his manhood, soon withdrew his troops to France, leaving his unfortunate dupe and tool to his melancholy fate.

During the two following years, General Sheridan, as commander of the Military Division of the Gulf, with headquarters at New Orleans, was charged with maintaining the authority of the national government within the lately insurgent States of Texas and Louisiana. Into the political complications of that period there is no need to enter here; nor is it necessary to recite the incidents of his administration

to show that Sheridan performed his unenviable duty with fearlessness, impartiality, and energy. Relieved in August, 1867, by the order of President Johnson, against the earnest protest of General Grant, he became the commander of the Department of the Missouri, with headquarters at Fort Leavenworth. Here he successfully directed the campaign of 1868–69 against the Arrapahoes, Cheyennes, Kiowas, and Comanches. On the day of President Grant's inauguration, March 4, 1869, he was appointed lieutenant-general, succeeding General Sherman in that great office. In 1870 he was sent by our government to Europe, to accompany the German troops in the war with France. His experiences and observations on this important tour of duty, during which he received from the king and the high officers of the German army the consideration suitable to his rank and his world-renowned achievements, he has recorded in a narrative of much simplicity, strength, and dignity, contained in the memoirs which were the closing work of his life. In 1884, through the retirement of his illustrious chief, William Tecumseh Sherman, he became the Commander of the Army of the United States; but, by an act of injustice which the American people will never cease to regret, Congress failed to provide for his elevation to the office of General, to which his heroic services fully entitled him.

The few remaining years of his life were spent in Washington, where he made his headquarters and his happy home, surrounded by his companions in arms and his loved and loving family. Honors had been

heaped upon him, almost beyond the lot of the most fortunate of mortals; but no tongue of malice or envy could say that he had not won them all and worn them worthily. Even in his highest estate the same hearty comrade, no old soldier ever approached him without a cordial greeting, or felt that his former commander had grown too great to be his friend.

In 1886, upon the death of Hancock, Sheridan was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States. In February last, in fulfilment of a long-cherished purpose, he came to Boston to meet his companions of the Massachusetts Commandery. On that memorable occasion, when martial and patriotic enthusiasm rose, in fast-swelling waves, to a height rarely attained, of the four hundred officers of the late war there assembled, few seemed to have larger promise of long-continued usefulness than he on whom all eyes were bent. But the appearance of robust health and aggressive vigor was deceptive. Already the forces that make against life were actively at work. A few weeks later, while on duty in Washington, he was seized by a fatal disorder. Bravely he resisted the assaults of the fell destroyer; all that medical science could do was brought to save his life, so dear to his country, so inexpressibly dear to his family; the whole nation waited in breathless anxiety for the news from his bedside, those who had fought against him vying with his former comrades in expressions of interest and attachment; while Congress, in a late repentance,

hastily passed a bill reviving the office of General of the Army, to which, on the first of June, he was appointed, — the third in succession of those who have held that proud position. But the hand had been laid upon him which is never shaken off by mortal will. In a faint hope of improvement he was brought to the beautiful shores of our own Massachusetts; but it was to die. On the 5th of August, at Nonquit, the stout soldier succumbed to a mightier conqueror. He sleeps by the Potomac, whose banks his squadrons had often swept, in all the pomp and terror of war. He sleeps at Arlington, the soldiers' rest, amid twenty thousand faithful defenders of the Union, — an army like that he commanded in life.

Peace to his ashes! Honor, immortal honor to his name! Strength, unity, prosperity, forever to the country he loved and served so well!

FINAL PROCEEDINGS.

FINAL PROCEEDINGS.

At a meeting of the Common Council, held on the 20th of December of 1888, Mr. Richard Sullivan, of Ward 22, offered the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted: —

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be hereby expressed to Gen. Francis A. Walker for his interesting and patriotic eulogy on the life and character of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, delivered before the city authorities in Tremont Temple on the 18th instant, and that General Walker be requested to furnish a copy of his eulogy for publication.

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be hereby expressed to the Rev. William Elliot Griffis for performing the duty of chaplain at the memorial service at Tremont Temple on the 18th instant, in honor of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan.

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be hereby expressed to the trustees of Tremont Temple for their courtesy in allowing the city the free use of their hall for the memorial services on the 18th instant in honor of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan.

The Board of Aldermen, on the 24th of December, concurred in the passage of the resolutions, and they were approved by the Mayor, December 27, 1888.

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